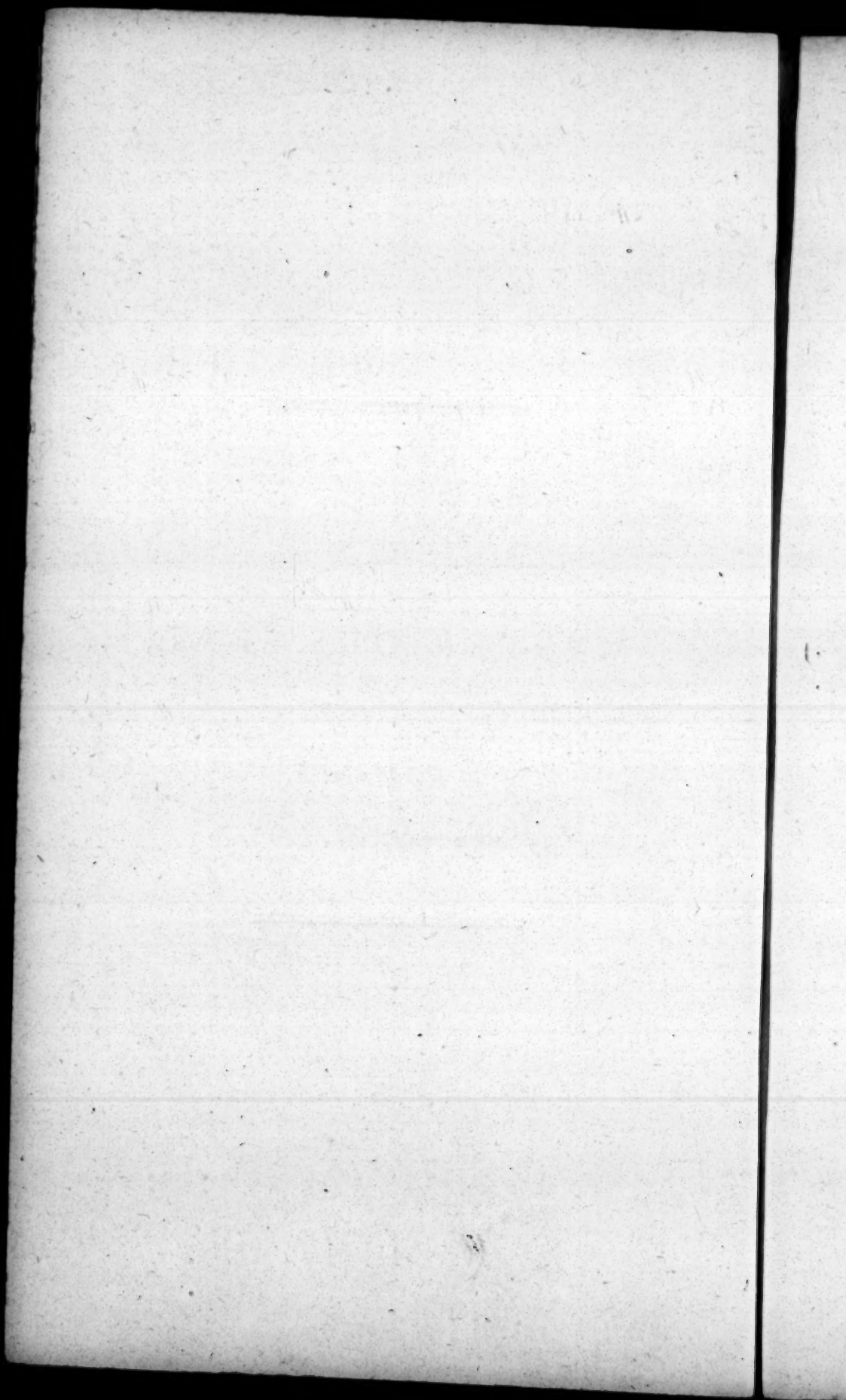


C.171. a.9.

THE
MYSTERIOUS SEAL,
A ROMANCE.



THE
MYSTERIOUS SEAL,
A
ROMANCE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By W. C. PROBY.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. H. WESTLEY, N^o. 159, OPPOSITE
THE NEW CHURCH, IN THE STRAND.

1799.

B  L

30.4.75

THE
MYSTERIOUS SEAL;

A
ROMANCE.

CHAP. I.

LOUND and successive peals of thunder reverberated amongst the hills, vivid and repeated flashes of lightning illumined the surrounding gloom, but only to render returning darkness more horrible and terrific; the wind howled with tremendous gust, and rushing with accumulated force through the opening of every valley, with difficulty the af-

B frightened

frighted traveller preserved the equilibrium of his motion. The rain at length descended, and falling in ceaseless torrents, every low built cottage within the circuit of the storm was threatened with destruction from its complicated operation. Such were the fearful horrors of the night, when the youthful and blooming Conrad bent his weary way fatigued and benighted, unknowing whither his steps tended, or where any friendly roof was to be found that might afford him shelter from the " pelting of the pitiless storm," that might serve to rest his wearied limbs, and recruit his exhausted spirits. The storm increased, the cold became intense, the violence of repeated gusts frequently threatened the affrighted Conrad with destruction, by forcing him into the river, which rolled impetuously at
his

his side, and now began to overflow its banks, and inundate the surrounding country. At length perceiving a light at some distance, he became cheered, and reanimated by the sight; and with all the force of remaining strength he ran towards the spot. Breathless and wearied he arrived, but, vain delusion, cruel disappointment! he found only the ruins of a small building, which appeared to have been fired by the lightning, and though the continued torrents of rain had destroyed the ascent of the flame, it yet remained half unextinguished, and cast a vivid glowing light to some distance around.

The unfortunate Conrad now became a prey to despair: the storm yet continued with unabating violence, and he anxiously and fearfully looked around for some friendly habitation where his life

might be preserved, for he felt the tide of existence ebb in his palpitating frame, and hardly dared to hope for another return of that pure pleasure he had frequently experienced in contemplating the rise of the glorious orb of day, and the cheerfulness diffused throughout nature, by its vivifying rays — a cheerfulness, which rendered the murky darkness around him more gloomy, and more horrible by the contrast — a cheerfulness, impressed by a benevolent Deity upon the work of his hands, and imperiously calling upon man to repay the benefit by gratitude and joy, and not by gloom and discontent. To that Deity, by an instantaneous effort of mind, he offered up a prayer for safety and protection. His mind thus abstracted for a moment from the scene before him, on returning to its contemplation became less disturbed,

disturbed, and looked forward to futurity with cheerful hope. Another light beamed upon his eyes : afraid of a similar deception, he anxiously looked towards the place where he had perceived it, which appeared to be at a considerable distance, but could not discover from whence it proceeded. His determination was instant ; for his only alternative was to run towards it, and endeavour to find shelter from the storm, or remain exposed to all its fury, which threatened him with destruction. He endeavoured to hasten to the spot, but fatigue and perturbation added to the want of food had exhausted him, and he could only walk slowly to the place from whence he had caught the glimpse. Some trees intervening for a moment intercepted his sight, and terror again overwhelmed him. Once more it met his

eyes, and again he collected all his strength, and endeavoured to reach it by the shortest way the darkness of the night would permit him to choose; at length with palpitating heart, and tottering frame, he arrived within a short distance of the spot, and a momentary flash of lightning exhibited a cottage to his view. The cheering sight thrilled him with joyful emotion, contending sensations agitated his nerves; and scarcely could his tottering limbs bear him to the door.

Colin, the inhabitant of the cottage, his wife Annette, and their daughter the lovely Matilda, had retired to rest early the preceding evening, but the violence of the storm frightened and alarmed the beautiful Matilda, who tremblingly arose, and scarce knowing what she did, went into the chamber where her parents

rents slept. Just at the moment, the united noise of the thunder and wind awakened Colin from a profound sleep, into which he had fallen. His cottage, though very lately repaired, was still little calculated to resist the fury of the storm, which now impetuously roared around it; he wisely therefore determined to arise with his wife and daughter, to descend into the lower apartment, and there prepared for the worst, wait the conclusion of the tempest. This determination he communicated to his wife, whom the storm had likewise awakened in the greatest alarm, and they all descended together, where obtaining a light, a chearful fire soon blazed upon the hearth. Annette and Matilda, in the highest degree of alarm at every peal of thunder, and every gust of wind, that with scarcely any

interval repeatedly followed each other, pressed closer and closer to their protector Colin, who himself affrighted at the danger which threatened their humble habitation, expected every moment that by the destruction of his cottage they should be turned out, houseless and forlorn, to experience all the accumulated horrors of misery and distress.

It was at this moment that Conrad knocked loudly at the door, a violent gust of wind at the same instant shook the cottage, and made it perceptibly rock. Annette and Matilda started and looked at Colin and each other, with wild affright, who himself trembled with fear. The roar of the hurricane had prevented the sound of Conrad's knock from being heard, he again knocked loudly, and in tones of the greatest distress, begged for
God's

God's sake they would give him shelter. Colin started at the sound, and could hardly believe it real, the repetition of the knock and of Conrad's intreaty, uttered in language still more distressful, convinced him of its truth, he ran to the door, accompanied by his wife and daughter, which was no sooner opened, than Conrad staggered in quite exhausted by his exertions. He had no sooner entered the door, than animation forsaking him, he fainted, and would have fell to the ground, had not Colin caught him in his arms, and bore him to a bench, where supporting his lifeless frame, the two females endeavoured by their tender attentions to recal the suspended functions of life. The figure of Conrad, pale, and haggard as he was, was still interesting; above the middle size, but not awkwardly tall, his limbs were

straight and well proportioned, and an expression was diffused over his countenance, which rendered it pleasing, even amid the pallid hue of death. The lovely Matilda redoubled her exertions, and aided by those of her mother, they were at last successful. Conrad opened his eyes, whose brilliancy though suffused in languor, yet animated his countenance, and added to it a considerable portion of interest. Becoming a little recovered, gratitude dictated his first expressions. "Thanks, said he, a thousand thanks for your kindness; fatigue, and want of food exhausted my spirits, and rendered me weak and feeble." The mention of want of food struck the ear of the kind hearted Colin, who immediately brought out some of those refreshments his cottage afforded, which though of the coarsest sort, appeared

peared to Conrad the most delicate of viands. Having satisfied the cravings of appetite, and quenched his thirst with some water, the only beverage the habitation of Colin afforded, he was at leisure to attend to the family who had so kindly administered to his wants.

Colin and Annette exhibited ordinary figures, though a considerable portion of good nature displayed itself in their countenances. But the form of Matilda arrested his observation : with a peculiar air of softness diffused over her features, a dignity was visible in every look, and in all her actions, which seemed greatly superior to the situation in which she was placed, and created surprize in the mind of Conrad, who could not withdraw his eyes from the fair figure that had attracted his notice. Her features were regular,

Beauty stamped them for her own, whilst the attempered brilliancy of her eyes, and the smiles which ever and anon played upon her countenance, rendered it irresistibly attractive. Her form was elegant, and grace was in every motion. Conrad gazed with admiration, and wondered with amazement at finding so much lovely grace, and dignified elegance in so humble an habitation. The attention of Matilda was equally directed towards Conrad. The refreshment he had partaken of added to the warmth emitted from the fire, that cheerfully blazed before him, invigorating his constitution, and animating his spirits, he forgot the fatigues he had experienced, and cheerfully joined in conversation with the family. The youthful down was still upon his cheek, but his features displayed a manly beauty,

beauty, and an expression which rendered them peculiarly interesting. Their eyes frequently met in the mutual interchange of observation, and the blush which then diffused itself over the lovely face of Matilda, added an interest to her charms, and a fascination to her beauty. The storm had been in some measure forgotten: novelty, curiosity, and cheerfulness, together with the pleasing sensations more particularly experienced by Conrad and Matilda, derived from those glances which each caught the other in the act of directing, had prevented its violence from exciting much fearful attention; though sometimes the roar of a sudden gust would interrupt their conversation, and create an anxiety in their minds, which though unpleasant, was momentary: and cheerfulness soon regained its former level.

The

The fury of the storm was now however considerably abated, and all felt the want of sleep. The conversation often interrupted by long pauses, at length gradually died away, and by common consent they laid down where they were, and enjoyed a short but refreshing sleep.

Conrad was the son of a peasant named Rollo, whose disposition was remarkably morose, and his manners repulsive and austere. His mother he had never known, she dying during his infancy. Rollo earned his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, and during the intervals of labour, paid some attention to the education of his son; he possessed much strength of mind and solidity of judgment, and an understanding much superior to his situation, and which had received a considerable share of cultivation. But a stern severity, and gloomy

gloomy harshness was continually displayed in his conduct, and forced him to live alone, from the dislike which his manners impressed upon his companions in labor. He treated them with a contempt that seemed to say he thought himself far their superior, and they repaid it by continually avoiding his company, and only conversing with him when compelled by necessity. His knowledge of mechanics rendered him highly useful, and in a great measure absolutely necessary, as no other for many miles around equalled him in skill. His son was his only companion, to his education he continually turned his attention, imparting to him the knowledge he had himself acquired, and endeavouring by accustoming him to reflect upon every object of nature, and every circumstance that passed within his

his contracted circle, to fortify and strengthen his judgment, and give a force to an understanding naturally good, which might enable him to rise superior to disappointment and adversity, and rely solely upon himself. Conrad, as he advanced towards manhood, frequently wondered at the talents of his father, contrasted with the humility of his situation; a mystery seemed to envelope his conduct, which the former found it impossible to penetrate. He was frequently tempted to enquire of his father the reason of his conduct, and the cause of his situation; but the gloomy severity which sat upon his brow, awed him into silence. Often he would resolve to pry into the mystery which created his surprize, but as often the austerity of his father's countenance, and the severe reserve of his manner disconcerted the
resolution

resolution he had formed, and the words he intended to utter, died upon his tongue.

At length Rollo was seized with illness, and with the utmost coolness and composure, saw the period of his dissolution fast approaching. Calling his son, who had nearly attained the age of twenty-one, to the side of the bed where he lay emaciated and weak, with difficulty he raised himself up, and spoke as follows, “ A mystery hangs over my
“ birth which I have never been able to
“ develope, I am convinced I was not
“ born in the humble state to which
“ chance or fate has reduced me, but
“ from whom I am descended, I know
“ not ; my parents, whom I never knew,
“ deserted me at an early age, and
“ I never could gain the least *informa-*
“ *tion relative to their name, rank, or*
“ *residence.*

“ *residence.* The person with whom I
“ resided at the period of my first
“ recollection, and from whom I re-
“ ceived the little knowledge with which
“ my mind is stored, turned me upon
“ the world to gain a subsistence as I
“ could, by my own labour and in-
“ dustry. I had lived with him in
“ great harmony, and considered him
“ as my father, which I imagined he
“ really was, until he undeceived me ;
“ but at the same time pleaded com-
“ plete ignorance of my parents and
“ relatives. When I was about sixteen
“ years of age, he requested me to
“ accompany him on a journey which
“ he was about to take, to this I
“ readily agreed, and we travelled on
“ foot for several days with little in-
“ termission. At length we stopped at
“ a house not far from this spot, where
“ we

“ we were hospitably offered refreshment,
“ and a bed for the night. I was
“ much fatigued by our continued tra-
“ velling, and soon sunk into a sound
“ sleep which lasted a considerable time.
“ When I awoke and enquired for my
“ conductor, judge my surprize at
“ being informed he had quitted the
“ house several hours, and no one knew
“ whither he had directed his steps. En-
“ quiry was vain, and search fruitless, he
“ was not to be found, nor could I pro-
“ cure the least information of the route
“ he had taken. Behaviour so mysterious
“ confounded and appalled me. I knew
“ not what course to pursue, nor how
“ to conduct myself, and remained for
“ a long time entirely absorbed in re-
“ flection; but the longer I reflected,
“ the more I was involved in mystery.
“ Happening accidentally to put my
“ hand

“ hand into my pocket, I felt some
“ money which had been placed there
“ since I entered the house, and like-
“ wise a seal that I had never before
“ seen, and which I long contemplated
“ with a scrutinizing eye, but could not
“ draw any conclusion from its exami-
“ nation tending to elucidate the mys-
“ tery in which I was involved. This
“ is the seal,” here he took a seal from
behind his pillow, and presented it to
his son, then proceeding, he said, “ the
“ mystery attached to this seal I have
“ not been able to developé, you per-
“ haps may be more fortunate, and some
“ time hence discover the secret” — His
strength now failing him, he squeezed
the hand of his son, convulsively strug-
gled for a minute, and expired.

Conrad reflecting upon the strange re-
lation which had been imparted to him,
became

became absorbed in a profound reverie, and a considerable time elapsed before he thought of calling in the necessary assistance, to dispose of the remains of his deceased father. These being decently interred, he sat down seriously to reflect upon the circumstances in which he was placed, he attentively examined the seal, upon which he perceived an emblematic device to be engraved, but its meaning he was utterly unable to unfold. He could not account for his father's conduct in quietly fixing his residence so near the spot, where he was deserted by his friend, and never afterwards making an effort to discover the mystery which, he was convinced, must be attached to his birth. Perhaps had his father lived a few minutes longer he might have explained his reasons, perhaps fate had ordained, he

he should not penetrate it. All was mystery, a vast ocean of conjecture was open to his view, but no friendly beacon appeared to direct his track. At length he determined to quit his native cottage, to journey on where chance might direct him, and endeavour to penetrate the mystery, which now occupied his mind to the exclusion of every other object. He was proceeding on this expedition, when losing his way he became benighted, and took shelter in the cottage of Colin as before related.

Colin opened his eyes when the sun was about to begin his daily career, and awakened the rest, who immediately arose and saw the glorious luminary arise in all its splendor. But the cheerfulness of the morning was considerably abated, by the strongly contrasted desolation, which appeared every
where

where around the effect of the late tremendous storm; trees torn up by the roots lay extended upon the plain, the adjoining river had overflowed its banks and revelled in the adjacent meadows. The carcases of sheep were floating down the impetuous torrent, and numbers of the feathered songsters were dead or expiring upon the ground. Matilda cast a look around, and sighed; many of her little favourites, many of those who had fed out of her hand, and repaid her with a song of gratitude, now lay dead at her feet. A walk into the garden appertaining to their cottage caused the heaving of another sigh in the tender bosom of Matilda: many of the flowers which she had reared with her own hands, which she had watched with tender care, and viewed their opening buds with delight and satisfaction, were now
extended

extended upon the ground, never more to rise. The gentle maid walked a little farther, and the lamb she had played with and fed, and which always bounded towards her with gratitude and love, now lay stretched out before her, lifeless and stiff. The tears started from her eyes and trickled down her cheeks; she was about to ask with the querulousness of distress "why is such a desolation of the fair face of nature permitted?" but checked the rising discontent, and said, "It is all for the best, and it becomes not mortals to complain." "It is, my sweet maid, no doubt for the best," replied Conrad, who had followed her in her walk, "such storms seem to be salutary crises of nature, without which, would most probably ensue earthquakes, desolating the earth with tenfold violence." He
looked

looked tenderly upon Matilda, the clearness and the freshness of the morning heightened her beauty, and improved all her charms, whilst the sensibility displayed in her countenance, gave an interest to every feature, and the tear starting from her eye, only rendered it more fascinating. Matilda raised her eyes, they met those of Conrad, and she blushed. The beauty of the morning which added to her charms, increased the captivation of his figure, even now the incipient germ of love appeared, and promised a blooming maturity. A call to the breakfast table interrupted their conversation, they proceeded towards the cottage, and all sat down to a homely repast.

Colin was a retainer of the haughty Baron de Umfreville, who possessed here a large estate, but it was sterile and un-

C

productive.

productive. The Baron resided at a considerable distance upon an estate, which added to a greater extent an unbounded fertility. A large share of the land was allotted to Colin, to cultivate such parts as were likely to repay the labour and expence employed in their cultivation ; in return for which, he was only allowed the common necessities of life, and a cottage to defend him and his family from the inclemency of the weather. But possessing an intellect, somewhat superior to the mental faculties of the peasants around him, who were his companions in agricultural labour, he was employed in the capacity of an overseer to direct their exertions, and for this an allowance was made him, which rendered his situation a little more comfortable than that of his fellows. Guided by the good taste
of

of Matilda, he had fitted up his cottage in a style much superior to the common method, the room below was arranged in a very convenient manner for all domestic purposes, whilst above, by means of a partition, two neat sleeping rooms were made, one of which was occupied by Colin and his wife, and the other by Matilda.

Conrad, whilst at breakfast, began to reflect seriously upon the necessity of his quitting the cottage, and pursuing the scheme he had formed; but the more he thought about leaving the habitation where he was now entertained, the more distressing it appeared to him. His father had taught him to reflect upon the operations of his own mind, as well as upon the circumstances that happened around him; and he mused deeply upon the repugnance he felt to depart from the

cottage. He began to wonder why he should have reflected at all upon the subject, when he ought to have considered his departure as a mere matter of course, and mused upon the subject till he forgot to eat. Colin, who was not much subject to fits of reflection, called out "Why
" measter, you seem to be in the dumps
" this morning, what's the matter with
" you?" but Conrad heard him not, his mind had taken flight into the regions of reverie, and was abstracted from the passing scene, until Colin slapped him upon the shoulder, and called out "Coom, coom, eat away, what I
" suppose your stomach is n't up to our
" homely fare, now you are not starving
" with hunger." Conrad roused from his reflections by the boisterous liveliness of Colin, apologized and again fell too. He soon found it was Matilda that engrossed

engrossed his imagination, and overpowered his judgment; he resolved again and again to quit the cottage, and pursue his journey, for the purpose of unraveling the mysterious secret, in which he appeared to be involved; but her lovely image as often presented itself, and forced him to alter his resolution.

At length, incapable of determining to leave the cottage and Matilda, he resolved to remain a little while if Colin would permit him, and perhaps chance might assist his scheme there as well as if he continued the journey he had planned, and at all events he could at any time leave the cottage and pursue it, forgetting that the longer he remained, the firmer he would be rivetted to the spot. His eyes involuntarily wandered upon Matilda, who appeared to his enraptured sight still more fascina-

ting; and rejoicing in the idea of remaining where he was, in spite of the dictates of his judgment, every thought of quitting her vanished from his mind. Matilda's thoughts had been likewise busily employed; she took an interest in the welfare of the young stranger, and called it sensibility: the probability of his early departure from the cottage, plunged her into disquietude, and anxious solicitude for his stay took possession of her mind, for which she could not account. Matilda was now about eighteen, and in a great measure uneducated, but had good natural talents and a fine taste, a little cultivation only was wanting to render her an accomplished woman.

Conrad finding it impossible to tear himself from Matilda, at length said to Colin, "I have conceived a great pre-
"dilection

“dilection for this part of the country,
“will you permit me for a short time
“to become an inmate in your hospi-
“table cottage; in return for such kind-
“ness, I will gladly share your agri-
“cultural labours, and perhaps may be
“an useful assistant.” Colin, who much
wanted additional aid, gladly accepted
the offer. The eyes of Matilda beamed
with joy, she felt herself relieved from
a weight of anxiety, and borne up
to the height of vivacity, she could
not tell why. It was agreed, that
Conrad should sleep in the lower room
of the cottage, and a nook was made
up for him, where, though he would
not sleep upon down, he might when
fatigued obtain a comfortable nap.

Every day now had its employment,
and each had its pleasures; their food
was homely, but they feasted upon con-

tent; their beds were hard, but their sleep was refreshing. Conrad became every day more and more unwilling to quit the cottage where he enjoyed happiness, but not unalloyed: the scheme he had formed, the mystery he wished to develope, frequently obtruded upon his mind, but the intrusion was most unpleasant, it reminded him of what he wished, but had not the resolution to perform. The varied charms of Matilda fixed him to the spot, with adamant chain, and the thought of leaving her plunged his mind into despondency. Frequently would they stray together at the dawn of day, contemplating with silent admiration, the varied tints of the landscape that opened to their view, and inhaling the enlivening perfumes ascending from the flowery carpets at their feet, the glorious
luminary

luminary majestically arose, impressing gaiety and smiles upon the face of nature, and infusing cheerfulness into every created being. Often at eve would they contemplate its decline, till the last red streak was vanished from their sight, and all was hushed and still. The fine taste of Matilda enjoyed the beautiful prospects of nature, with unceasing pleasure; she soon discovered the great mental powers of Conrad, and aided by a large share of good sense, participated all his stores of knowledge and reflection. Her mind gradually expanded, and assimilated itself to his, an union of sentiment was a chain too powerful to be broken by any common force. They loved, but the judgment of Conrad struggled, and ineffectually against its power, he wished, he ardently wished to develope the mys-

tery of his descent, but all the courage he could summon to his aid was insufficient to enable him to quit the cottage, and his beloved Matilda. To take her with him on a wandering journey was madness, to unite himself with her for life, would prevent him from pursuing what still remained the darling object of his wishes.

C H A P. II.

WHILST Conrad remained in this state of perplexity, a messenger suddenly arrived from the Baron de Umfreville, bearing a command for all his retainers here to depart immediately to the estate where the Baron resided. He had added another manor to the extensive domains that surrounded his castle, containing a large portion of land, which though fertile, remained waste and untilled. This he determined to put into a state of cultivation; and as it

seemed likely to repay the labour bestowed in a more ample manner than the estate where Colin resided, he resolved to desert the latter, and confine his attention solely to the princely domains, in which his residence was situate. The messenger he sent was commanded to be the guide of the retainers, until they arrived at the place of their destination.

The mandate was absolute, and they durst not disobey it; but though unpossessed of those comforts which endear man to his home, a natural attachment to the place of their birth, which a harsh command now forced them to quit, caused the flowing of many a tear, and the heaving of many a sigh. Matilda possessed of finer feelings than the rest, felt a more lively regret at quitting those scenes she had so often contemplated

plated with complacency and delight, which were endeared to her by habit, and the prospect of which had frequently conferred upon her the purest pleasure and the calmest tranquillity. The flowers she had cultivated, the birds she had fed, all presented themselves to her view, and renewed in her tender bosom, the most painful sensations. Conrad alone felt no pain at the thought of leaving a place, which he had long wished to quit, had not his love for Matilda withheld him. They were now to depart together ; there was a chance of meeting with some clue to guide him through the labyrinth of mystery, and he rejoiced rather than lamented at the opportunity that offered of leaving the place, without offering violence to his feelings. But his joy was somewhat alloyed by the pain which his beloved

loved Matilda evidently endured at the thought of quitting her native cottage, though her sorrow was alleviated by the reflection that Conrad was to accompany her.

No alternative remained, they must depart. Conrad, that he might have a good plea for his journey to the estate of Umfreville, determined to pass for the son of Colin, to which the latter had no objection; and sorrowful and melancholy the party commenced their journey. The guide rode in front, the females, the old men, and the children were placed in the middle, whilst the young, and the middle aged, guarded on all sides. They travelled on with little or no interruption for several days, when a river which had broken its banks, and inundated the adjacent country, was the first impediment they met

met with in their passage. After several vain attempts to pass its rapid current, they were forced to wait for two days, when the water a little subsided. Boats were procured for the purpose of effecting a passage, into one of which, Matilda was about to step, when her foot slipped, and she fell into the stream. Conrad, almost frantic with affright, rushed into the torrent, regardless of danger, and endeavoured to catch the lovely girl in his arms, but the rapidity of the current forced her from his grasp; again he essayed and succeeded, bearing his lovely burthen in triumph to the bank, where he arrived breathless and exhausted. Matilda had the presence of mind to endeavour to keep herself from sinking, and when brought to the shore was yet sensible, the croud gathered around, and she was conveyed to a neighbouring

neighbouring cottage, to which Conrad accompanied her, where every assistance was rendered that good nature could suggest. The affrighted father, and still more afflicted mother, showered blessings upon the head of her preserver, and Matilda when recovered, thanked him in terms that sufficiently betrayed her love; he hung over her enamoured, and in every word and action, evinced the tender affection with which her amiable qualities had inspired him.

Matilda was still languid, and it was highly proper she should remain for a short time until perfectly recovered; added to this, the river was yet dangerous to pass; and it was determined for the whole party to stay until the morrow, when from the appearance of the water, it would be sufficiently subsided to allow them to pass in perfect safety.

safety. Conrad enjoying the beauty of the prospect which extended itself before the cottage, perceived at some distance a ruinous castle. He enquired to whom it belonged, but could not gain the information he desired, only learning that for a number of years past it had been mouldering to decay, and was now nearly in ruins. Curiosity, sharpened by the desire of attaining the object he had in view, was constantly predominant in his mind, and he instantly determined to visit the ruin. Arriving in a short time at the spot, he found the information he had received relative to the state of the castle to be strictly true. The moat was filled with rubbish, and whilst the shell of the castle remained in a great measure entire, the passages were choaked up with fragments, and many of the apartments so ruinous as
to

to render any attempt to explore them highly dangerous. He made an effort to force his way along some of the passages, and visit the chambers, but found so many dangers environing him, that he was compelled to quit the attempt, and observing nothing to gratify curiosity, was about to depart, when walking along the court yard something struck his foot, on looking down he perceived a small picture, which on taking from the ground, proved to be the portrait of an elegant female, who greatly resembled himself. Struck with the resemblance, he attentively and minutely examined it, and the likeness between himself and the female, of whom he held the portrait in his hand, appeared still more exact. Wondering at such an incident, he anxiously looked around, and again endeavoured

deavoured to explore the castle, which perhaps might contain some important elucidation of the mystery in which he was involved; but all his efforts were fruitless, and at length he was forced to return, with new cause for wonder, and more enveloped in mysterious circumstances. He pondered for some time, whether he should not remain in the neighbourhood of the castle for the purpose of endeavouring to make discoveries, which he fancied might be interesting to him, and were attached to the mansion he had quitted. But Matilda started up in his mind, and overpowered every reason his judgment could urge in favour of remaining; at length he determined to proceed to the domains of Umfreville, but keeping in his memory the situation of the castle he just departed from, to return to it at some future

future period, in case he did not meet with the elucidation he sought in any other place. Arrived at the cottage, he found Matilda much recovered, and upon the morrow being perfectly restored to health, the whole party resumed their journey.

On the second day after they had quitted the river, they drew near to the territories of the Baron de Umfreville. A quarrel had arisen between him and the Baron de Montacute, a neighbouring chief, equally haughty and unyielding as himself; neither deigned to appeal to law for the purpose of terminating the dispute, and each had recourse to the sword, as the only means of settling their differences. Their retainers were mutually arrayed, and the battle was raging between the contending parties when they arrived. Conrad possessed
a martial

a martial and an enterprising spirit, the sight of the battle animated his mind, and in spite of the tender entreaties of Matilda, he took up a sword just dropped by one of the combatants who had received a mortal wound, and ranged himself under the banner of Arthur, the young Baron de Umfreville, who commanded his father's retainers. The little army commanded by Umfreville was the most numerous, but their opponents led on by the Baron de Montacute in person were courageous, and scorned to retreat, unless absolutely compelled by necessity. Montacute advancing a short distance from his party challenged Umfreville to single combat, the latter indignantly accepted the defiance, and rode forward to meet him. The onset was furious, the helmet of Umfreville was cleft by a single stroke of his

his adversary's sword, wielded with a strong and mighty arm; he endeavoured to return the blow, but was inferior to Montacute in strength and skill. The latter pressed forward upon the half-conquered Umfreville, his sword was better tempered and more powerful, and forcibly bringing it into contact with his adversary's, that of Arthur was broken, and himself immediately unhorsed; Montacute advancing at the same time upon the retainers of Umfreville, and commanding his troop to follow. The former disheartened at the fall of their leader, were already preparing for flight, when Conrad who had seized a horse, from which a wounded cavalier was compelled to alight, forcibly advanced against the victorious Montacute, and before the latter was fully aware of the approach of an adversary, he

he struck him from his horse. The retainers of Montacute were now in their turn dispirited. For Umfreville at this moment arose from the ground, and on foot, led his party furiously to the attack. Montacute arose from the dust, and was driven with his retainers, before the victorious Umfreville. Three times the brave chieftain endeavoured to rally his dispirited soldiers, but the fate of the day was decided, and as often he was defeated, and at length compelled ignominiously to retreat. Conrad remained engaged in the action until the last pursuit was closed, and then retired from the field, contented with the part he had performed. Arthur de Umfreville had viewed with admiration the bravery and presence of mind displayed by Conrad; and eagerly enquired to whom he was indebted

debted for that courageous conduct which decided the event of the battle; but no one amongst his little army could inform him; at length the conductor of the party, who had just arrived, acquainted him he was the son of Colin, one of his father's retainers. Pride predominated in the mind of Arthur, and ashamed of his defeat, his rage became ungovernable, when he found he owed the victory to the courage of a man, whose humble situation he looked upon with contempt. He forbade any of those under his command, upon pain of death to mention the circumstance, and determined to arrogate to himself all the merit and glory of the action.

The Baron, previously to the arrival of those retainers whom he had sent for, had issued his commands for the erection

erection of some mud hovels for their reception. He considered them as a race of beings, wholly unworthy the notice of so exalted a character as himself, and was only induced to issue such an order, that their time, which he wished to appropriate solely to the cultivation of his land, might not be employed in any concern of their own. A habitation somewhat better than the rest was appropriated to Colin, who still continued an overseer of their labour, and there he, with Annette, Matilda, and Conrad, immediately took up their residence.

The Baron de Umfreville was a man sensual and vicious, haughty, and unfeeling, the most disgusting arrogance marked his character, and swayed his conduct. Unpossess of the least particle of feeling for the distress of others, he looked only to the gratification of his

D

passions

passions, and cared for nothing but the means of satisfying the cravings of appetite. Yet polished in his manners, and capable of assuming the exterior of virtue, and the language of kindness and benevolence whenever it suited the purposes he wished to effectuate, and of concealing the most wicked intentions under the imposing garb of beneficence and politeness; he was at once an unprincipled sensualist, and a consummate hypocrite. But the remembrance of past crimes and misfortunes would often intrude in spite of the continued round of pleasure, in which he was continually involved, and their frequent return rendered him at times gloomy and suspicious, brutal, and ferocious.

His sister, the Lady Rosalind, had married a young knight, whose family, tho' respectable, could not boast the noble blood
which

which ran in the veins of the Umfrevilles. His situation being far beneath them, her father not only positively refused his consent to the marriage, but forbid him the castle, and strictly enjoined her to think no more of a man, so unworthy of being put in competition with the dignity of his house. Rosalind promised obedience, but soon found an opportunity of eloping, and becoming irrevocably united to her lover. Her father, and his son the present Baron, were in the highest degree exasperated, at an act which they thought degraded their dignity, and disgraced their house, and neither would see her after the marriage. Her husband having a small estate in the neighbourhood of the haughty castle of Umfreville, they took up their residence there, in hopes of being able, at a future time, to soften the obdurate

heart of the Baron, and inherit a small portion of his enormous wealth. A hope well founded, as the Baron, her father, was a man of literature, in the constant exercise of numerous virtues, and who had been remarkably fond of his daughter; but his good qualities were clouded by the most haughty pride, which was frequently displayed in his conduct, and now influenced him to spurn the submissive supplications of his daughter, and reject her with disdain; it therefore might be imagined with a considerable share of probability, that the benevolence and good sense, which were known to actuate his mind in despite of his disgusting haughtiness, would soon predominate, and returning fondness hail them to the paternal mansion. But alas, this hope was only formed to be disappointed, her father died not
long

long after the marriage, without making the least provision for her, though just before his death she was delivered of a son. The present Baron still exasperated at what he called the disgraceful marriage of his sister, threatened her, and her husband, with the effects of his vengeance. Rosalind, actuated by too high a spirit submissively to crouch to her brother, laugh at his menaces, and set them at defiance. The Baron became soon after reconciled, and invited them in a friendly manner to his mansion, they accepted the invitation, and went to the castle with their infant son, but from thence never returned. The Baron reported they had left the country, but universal suspicion pointed at him as their murderer, though his vast power effectually prevented any enquiry from taking place. But, though able

to stifle enquiry, he could not rid himself of the terrors that frequently haunted him, he seldom could remain long alone, and sometimes amid the hilarity of a feast, or the voluptuousness of sensuality, was seized with a sudden fright, followed by an universal tremor, a cold sweat and every symptom of a perturbed mind, and frequently when he happened to be by himself, would suddenly rise from his seat, and pace the room with quick and agitated step, looking on this side, and on that, with the most fearful anxiety, until overwhelmed by terror, he was forced to go in search of company, that might relieve his mind in some measure from the weight that oppressed it. An unfortunate event had likewise occurred, the recollection of which added considerably to his unhappiness, this was, the loss of his daughter, who

who in early infancy was unaccountably stolen, and had not since been heard of; of this daughter, his wife, whom he had married late in life, died in childbed.

Arthur inherited all his father's vices, and his father's hypocrisy, and was indeed the very counterpart of his parent. Little affection appeared between them, but Arthur, afraid of the effects which might result from his father's anger, constantly abstained from interfering with the gratification of his vices; and from the extensive means resorted to by the Baron, to ensure that gratification, the son enjoyed a reputation for virtue, which actually appeared in his conduct, but which only resulted from a want of opportunity for the commission of vice. To relieve the tedium arising from the absence of employment, and unpossessed of any taste for

literature, he had recourse to mechanics, in the practice of which he secretly and frequently laboured to pass away some portion of the time that hung heavy upon his hands, and became a proficient in most of its branches.

The mansion which formed the residence of the Baron de Umfreville, had been partly pulled down and rebuilt by his father, according to the dictates of a singular taste, and again much altered by the present inhabitant. That part known by the name of the West Tower, was reported to be haunted, strange noises were said to have been heard, and even apparitions seen. It was however wholly uninhabited, and sedulously closed against all visitors, nor was it ever entered by the Baron, or any of his household. The East Tower was appropriated to his pleasures, and inaccessible to all but himself.

self. In the remaining part the Baron and his household resided; and there he left the lower apartments entirely to his retainers, except the library, which was constantly open, whilst himself resided wholly in the first story, in a suite of magnificent apartments, fitted up under his own immediate inspection.

The retainers newly arrived upon the Baron's domains, commenced their labours under the inspection of Colin, whilst Conrad took a share in the work, and lived as usual with the family, but still impatient concerning the mystery which he ardently wished to unravel, he could form no plan by means of which a discovery might ensue, and the only remaining alternative was to trust to chance. Thus day after day passed on in the same beaten track; whilst

his love for Matilda increased, and an union with the lovely maid was the anchor on which he rested his expectation of happiness. But anxious to discover the mystery that oppressed him, he could not bear the thought of giving up the pursuit, and though enraptured with Matilda's charms, marriage would have fettered his exertions, and prevented him from taking those steps, which, unincumbered, an anxious curiosity might lead him to take. Still however he could not resolve to leave her, and the continual contests that ensued in his mind between anxious curiosity and love, subtracted from his happiness, whilst they kept him in a state of constant perplexity and suspense, but gave rise to no determination.

Jaques, who was the valet of the Baron, was likewise a pander to his vices, and
found

found it a very difficult task to procure new, and pleasing objects, for the gratification of the vicious passions of him, whose fickle and capricious temper required a change almost in the very moment of enjoyment. A numerous seraglio rendered him still more fastidious, and the task imposed upon Jaques had become an insupportable burden. He thought he might perhaps find some object worthy of regard in this point of view, amongst the retainers lately arrived, and for this purpose directed his steps towards the newly cultivated ground, where he visited every hovel belonging to them, but found no female in the least capable of pleasing the capricious passions of his master. He was departing in despair, determined to quit a service become intolerable to him, and retire to some dis-

tant country, when he recollected he had not visited the habitation of Colin, thither he immediately repaired, and too surely observed the beauteous Matilda; her fine form and lovely features, immediately presented themselves to his mind, as the means of reconciling him to the Baron, who had begun to be displeased with what he called his neglect. She was a prize which might probably make his fortune, and release him for the remainder of his life, from the afflictions of servitude. He sat down and entered into conversation, whilst Annette invited him to partake of some refreshment; he thanked her, and it was handed to him by Matilda, little thinking she was administering hospitality to the man, who was about to betray her innocence, and barter her virtue. Colin and Conrad were absent,

sent, and Jaques without interruption conversed with Matilda and her mother.

“ This seemeth, fair damsel,” said he,
“ but an uncomfortable situation for
“ you and your mother to reside in.
“ I think it is in my power to procure you a better habitation.” “ We
“ should be greatly obliged to you,” said the unsuspecting Annette, “ we are not
“ very comfortable here, to be sure,
“ though we have been forced to be
“ content, for want of a better habitation, but I’m sure as how, we should
“ be glad to find a better cottage to
“ live in.” “ Not a doubt of it,” said Jaques, “ and it seemeth to me that
“ your husband, as an overseer, and one
“ of the chief retainers of our gracious
“ Lord the Baron, ought to have apartments appropriated for him in the castle.” “ La sir,” said Annette, “ you
“ joke,

“ joke, such humble folk as us are not fit
“ to live in the castle.” “ I think,” said
Matilda, “ as we are perfectly content in
“ our present residence, we cannot be more
“ happy, in the most splendid palace
“ upon earth ; and therefore the change
“ would not be so much for our advantage.” “ It seemeth to me, fair damsel,”
replied Jaques, “ you are mistaken, you
“ would assuredly be better content with
“ snug comfortable apartments in the
“ castle, than with this mud built hovel,
“ that scarcely keeps itself up against
“ the driving of the storm ; but more
“ of this another time, I will for the
“ present take my leave, in a few days
“ your cottage shall again contain me, and
“ you will perhaps accept the offer which
“ has only your good in view.” With this
reply, he departed, leaving Annette and
Matilda surprized at the interest he
seemed

seemed to take in their welfare. As yet they were ignorant of his character and most detestable office; they only knew him as the valet and confident of the Baron.

Colin and Conrad, upon returning to the cottage, were made acquainted with what had passed, and Colin leapt for joy at the thought of becoming an inmate of the castle, and partaking of good cheer, to which at present he was a stranger. Venison pasties, strong humming ale, and clouted cream, filled his imagination, and left no void for any other sensation. Conrad rejoiced too at the change; for every variety in his situation afforded him a subject for joy: the discovery, which he thought himself destined to make, continually presented itself to his mind, and at every alteration wrought by chance in the chequered scene of his existence,

existence, hope clung fast to his mind, and flattered him he must assuredly attain the object of his search; but still the invitation caused some slight suspicious fear to arise in his breast: he feared she might become the prey of a titled seducer, to whom her beauty would be a powerful temptation; he feared some fortunate rival might deprive him for ever of her affections, and render him miserable and forlorn, deprived of the only object upon which he founded his hopes of happiness. A thousand fears agitated his bosom; a thousand anxieties crowded thick into his mind; he wished they might remain where they were, but the mysterious circumstances relating to himself rushed upon his recollection. He could not hope to develop them by remaining stationary in a hovel, labouring day after day in the same beaten track; it

it was only by becoming an actor in a variety of situations, he could have a chance in his favour of making any discovery.* Thus vibrating in resolution, he still remained in suspense, and was driven forward by passing circumstances.

Jaques no sooner was summoned to the Baron, for the purpose of assisting him in dressing, than he began—"Good
" my Lord, I have seen a damsel this
" morning, who seemeth to me worthy
" of your Lordship's attention."——
" What! I suppose," replied the Baron,
" one of those ordinary creatures you
" have been lately in the habit of in-
" troducing to me; but I will no longer
" silently suffer your neglect and in-
" attention; the dungeons below are
" ready for the reception of those of my
" household who neglect their duty, do
" you hear?"—" Good my Lord, let
" me

“ me intreat your Lordship to suspend
“ your anger for a moment : The dam-
“ fel I allude to is framed by the beauti-
“ fullest mechanism of nature ; the roses
“ and the lilies are continually contest-
“ ing which shall enjoy the superiority
“ in her countenance ; her features are
“ regularly proportioned to each other,
“ and are singly formed according to
“ the line and rule of beauty ; her eyes
“ sparkle as the diamond ; her lips are
“ as coral ; and her teeth, in even rows,
“ appear like newly-polished ivory ; her
“ form is delicate and well proportioned.
“ In short, my Lord, she is a perfect
“ beauty.” The quaint description given
by Jaques inflamed the imagination of the
Baron. “ If,” said he, “ she is all that you
“ assert, and you betray her to my arms,
“ your reward shall be ample, it shall be
“ every thing you can wish for.”——

“ Thanks,

“ Thanks, my good Lord, a thousand
“ thanks for your kindness ;—but a
“ thought strikes me, your Lordship
“ shall see her yourself ; I can easily in-
“ troduce you in disguise into the cot-
“ tage of Colin as a brother domestic of
“ your household.”—“ Let it be so,” re-
plied the Baron ; “ I will disguise myself,
“ and we will depart immediately.”—
“ Stay, my good Lord ; permit your
“ servant to say a word : Only a short
“ time has passed since I was at the
“ cottage ; if I return again so quickly,
“ it will appear strange, and they will
“ peradventure have some suspicion.”—
“ True, Jaques ; I had forgotten that
“ circumstance : it shall be to-morrow
“ morning.”—“ I will attend your
“ Lordship to the residence of the fair
“ damsel whenever I receive your Lord-
“ ship’s command for that purpose.”

Jaques

Jaques submissively quitted his haughty master, and immediately ran to Margaret, a fellow servant, for whom he had long entertained an affection. "My dear Margaret," uttered the joyful Jaques, "let us congratulate ourselves; my fortune is made for ever!"—"How, in the name of wonder, is that?" replied Margaret, surprized. Jaques was confounded: he was about to play a villainous part; he was about to become the betrayer of innocence and virtue to the vilest of purposes; and he was ashamed to avow the act. His joy at the prospect of becoming free from the trammels of a servitude he detested had overbalanced his judgment. He now only said, in return to the question of Margaret, "In consideration of my faithful and long-continued services, his Lordship means to reward me
" handsomely,

“ handsomely, and enable me to live
“ without being under the necessity of
“ continuing in servitude.”——“ And
“ what deed art thou to do, Jaques, to
“ gain that reward ?” The confusion of
Jaques increased. “ It is for my past
“ services, my dear Margaret, and not
“ for any other deed, that I am about
“ to be rewarded.” The doubts expressed upon Margaret’s countenance, and the consciousness of guilt which haunted the mind of Jaques, destroyed the pleasure which had before filled his imagination, and made him recoil with horror from the contemplation of the character he was about to act ; but the prospect of the wealth and independence he should acquire, by rendering himself subservient to the gratification of his master’s passions, and the certain loss he should experience by not proceeding to the
the

the completion of the deed he had undertaken to perform, rushed in full force upon his mind, and, after a short struggle, expelled the remorse he had begun to feel, and stimulated him to advance in the path he had entered. Margaret perceived the absence which he displayed whilst this conflict between virtue and sordid interest occupied his mind, and suspected some evil deed was in agitation; but Jaques, ashamed of the confusion and absence of mind he had exhibited, arose, and, with an affected smile and tender squeeze of the hand, took his leave.

The Baron frequently since his last interview with Jaques had thought of the fair one, of whom the latter had given a description. This, quaint as it was, being uttered with a peculiar degree of warmth, had inspired Umfreville with ideas of the beauty of Matilda, which,

at

at every repetition became stronger and more vivid, and rendered him fretfully impatient for the arrival of the hour when he was to be gratified by a sight of the lovely object. Thus impatiently anxious, he arose at an early hour, sent for Jaques, and arranged with him the manner of his disguise, which was settled in a short time, but not soon enough for the impatience of the Baron. At length they sallied forth together, the Baron being habited in the dress of one of his own retainers; and tho' some share of dignity was impressed upon his countenance, yet it was so much mixed with meanness as to detract nothing from the supposition of his being nothing more than a superior domestic of the Baron de Umfreville. The fineness of the morning formed a striking contrast with the dark purpose of their minds; and it cannot be wondered

dered at, if they had no relish for any of the numerous beauties of Nature, which spontaneously courted their observation; the lowering gloom, or the tempest's roar, would have been more in unison with their feelings, and congenial to their minds.

Matilda was sitting at the door of the cottage, enjoying the beauties which beamed in the surrounding prospect; the beautiful and sublime were happily blended, and by their intimate union increased the pleasure arising from the contemplation of each. Fields cultivated and fertile formed the fore ground of the picture, through which a small river slowly meandering, added a freshness that delighted the imagination, whilst it gratified the senses. Behind, hills clothed with wood and covered with verdure, formed the ascending steps to the

the back ground of the landscape, which consisted of mountains rugged and rocky, whose tops were lost in vapour, and whose sides were destitute of fertility. Jaques and the Baron walked leisurely on, as if taking a walk, allured by the beauty of the morning, until they approached the spot where the innocent unsuspecting Matilda sat musing upon the scene before her. The approach of strangers roused her from her reverie. The Baron no sooner saw the beautiful Matilda, than she appeared every thing that Jaques had related of her, every thing that his own inflamed imagination had portrayed her, and even considerably more. "So, fair damsel," said Jaques, "you seem to be employed in the same manner that we are, contemplating the beauties of the morning." Matilda replied by courteously

E

inviting

inviting them into the cottage; an invitation which they did not hesitate to accept. Annette set before them some refreshment, the Baron gazed upon Matilda and was silent. Jaques was about to mention again his proposition for them to quit the cottage, and accept apartments in the castle, when an unexpected accident favoured his design. The cottage had been built in a great hurry, and of materials not properly prepared, in consequence of which, whilst the Baron and Jaques were there, one of the main supports of the building suddenly gave way. A loud crack informed the party of their danger, and scarcely were they safe in the open air, than it fell and was in an instant a heap of ruins. Annette screamed, and loudly lamented the despoiling of her furniture; Matilda sighed and lamented the destruction of the dwelling,

dwelling, which had now become dear to her; whilst the Baron and Jaques, though apparently sympathizing with the distressed females, secretly exulted at the opportunity it afforded of furthering their iniquitous purpose. Jaques without hesitation offered them apartments in the castle, adding, "I am sure my Lord, the Baron, is of too good and humane a disposition, to have the least objection to such an arrangement: Is he not Pierre?" addressing himself to the Baron, who readily answered in the affirmative. There was now no alternative, they must either accept the offer or have the ground for their bed, and the stars for their covering; it was of course accepted, and it was agreed that Jaques should send some of the inferior domestics at the castle, to assist in extricating the furniture from the rubbish, and that An-

nette and Matilda should wait the arrival of Colin and Conrad, that they might all depart together for the castle; where it was promised by Jaques, that apartments should immediately be fitted up for them, observing, that my Lord the Baron would exult in the thought of making a virtuous family comfortable and happy. "Not a doubt of it," said the disguised Baron, "and you may rest assured of enjoying there, a permanent and comfortable residence." The proposition of Jaques having thus been accepted, himself and the Baron immediately took their leave, the latter rejoicing that chance had so far favoured his designs, as to cover with a specious and amiable pretext, the invitation of Matilda to the Castle; an event which was exactly the identical circumstance, necessary as a preliminary to the plan he began

began already to form, for the seduction of Matilda. Jaques could with difficulty conceal his joy; the prize of plenty and independence presented itself to his mind, and excluded every other consideration. At length they arrived at the Castle, and the assumed domestic became once more the haughty and powerful Baron de Umfreville.

Apartments adjoining those occupied by Jaques, were appropriated to the use of the new inhabitants, which they took possession of on their arrival. All of them were pleasant; but that which was given to Matilda enjoyed the most beautiful prospect. Conrad, with his usual curiosity, wandered over all the apartments that were accessible to his view; but several yet remained which he had no opportunity of inspecting, and his curiosity remained still excited. He re-

joiced at his arrival, imagining it might be a step towards the end he had in view, but anxiety for Matilda, considerably abated his joy.

C H A P. III.

THE Baron reflecting upon the former situation of Matilda, and the want of education which must be visible in her conduct, determined to add the accomplishments of mind to corporeal beauty, and by employing the ablest masters the age afforded, to give an elegant polish to her manners, and render her a proficient in the polite arts; by means of which her personal beauty would become more fascinating and voluptuously enchanting. His only design concealed

under this apparent act of kindness, being to render the gratifications of sense more poignant, and add to their voluptuousness, by making the accomplishments of mind subservient to their demands. But to employ means for the accomplishment of Matilda alone, would have displayed a very suspicious appearance, as he understood from what was said at the time the cottage tumbled into ruins, that Colin had a son. He therefore resolved to send for Colin, who knowing not for what purpose he was wanted, was ushered trembling into the presence of his Lord, and hardly dared to lift up his eyes to the contemplation of the being, who in magnificent state was seated before him, and who immediately addressed him thus, "Colin, you have been
" a faithful retainer to me, you have
" rendered services which I think deserve
a higher

“ a higher reward than you have hitherto,
“ enjoyed.” Colin bowed, and endeavoured to stammer out an awkward acknowledgment; the Baron continued, “ I
“ am informed you have a son and daughter;
“ of the beauty of the latter, and
“ of the good understanding of both, I
“ have heard much, and have determined,
“ in consequence of what I have
“ heard, and your faithful services, to
“ release you from all labour for the remainder
“ of your life, and by means of
“ the best preceptors the country affords,
“ to educate your son and daughter in
“ all those accomplishments, which it
“ has hitherto been considered the exclusive
“ privilege of nobility to possess
“ and display.” Colin was struck dumb with astonishment, and knew not how to express his gratitude, he made many awkward attempts, but the Baron knew

the fell purpose of his mind, and wished not to hear thanks of which conscious guilt told him he was undeserving, but immediately dismissed Colin to his own reflections. He had now ascended an important step towards his purpose, he had secured the wondering gratitude of Colin, and his family, which there was every probability would inspire them with a veneration for his character, and render them blind to his sinister designs.

Colin returned to his family in an extasy of joy, he danced and capered and sung, until Annette and Matilda and Conrad, all concluded he had been seized with a sudden fit of insanity. Conrad took hold of him, and endeavoured to soothe his mind to rest, but Colin still jumped and roared until breathless and exhausted ; he at last sat down impelled by fatigue in the midst
of

of his wondering family, and related the events which had given rise to such a paroxysm of tumultuous joy. In the conclusion of his relation, addressing himself to Conrad, he said, "I did not tell his lordship that you was not my son, so you know you can profit by the opportunity." The idea of being no longer in a state of labouring fervitude, and of seeing her daughter decked in all the accomplishments and graces of a lady, took exclusive possession of the mind of Annette, and made her alternately laugh and cry, unable to moderate the sensations of joy, that agitated her mind. Matilda received the intelligence with unfeigned satisfaction, but a doubt at the instant arose in her mind, relative to the intentions of the Baron, in performing an act of such apparent kindness and benevolence,

It was an act so opposite to the general tenor of his character, that she was at a loss to what motive to assign it; but the purity of her own intentions, and the goodness of her heart, would not permit her to arraign the motives of another, and she contented herself with imputing his conduct to a sudden ray of benevolence, darting through the general gloom of his mind, or to a change beginning to operate in his character, of which this was the first forerunner; the latter became her favoured supposition, she loved to contemplate the bright side of human affairs, and dwelt with complacency upon the idea of a haughty and vicious tyrant becoming on a sudden, a kind and beneficent master. The mind of Conrad was not so complacently charitable to the intentions of the Baron; there appeared to him a
cloven

cloven foot beneath the lovely garb of benevolence. The offer, which Jaques (the known confidant of the Baron, and as report had since whispered him, the pander of his vices,) had made previously to the ruin of the cottage, of apartments in the castle for Colin and his family, added to the present apparently kind and beneficent act, inspired his mind with suspicions, which when he contemplated the beauty of Matilda, and the character of the Baron, met with confirmation strong. He mused upon the subject, and determined to profit by the instructions of the preceptors destined for him by the Baron, whilst he keenly and circumspectly watched the conduct of the latter relative to Matilda, and warned her from time to time of the dangers that environed her.

Preceptors were procured, and Margaret

garet was appointed to attend on Matilda as her servant. The lovely Matilda, with quick perceptions, and a fine understanding, soon became a proficient in every polite accomplishment, music and dancing she acquired with rapidity, and in her execution displayed a grace peculiarly her own; with a little assistance, but principally by means of her great natural powers, she became learned in Latin and Greek, and having constant access to the library of the Baron, tasted and enjoyed all the beauties of the poets and orators, with whose works it was adorned, which added increasing vigour to the naturally fine taste Matilda already possessed; whilst the strong intellectual powers of Conrad eagerly devoured, and healthfully digested every particle of knowledge, that was offered to their grasp. He also became an ardent

dent admirer of the Latin and Greek authors, a knowledge of whose language he rapidly acquired; and frequently would Matilda and himself remain for hours in the library, with their minds abstracted from every other subject, and active alone in literature. The father of the present Baron, was a man of no mean literary attainments, and took a pleasure in collecting every manuscript that was likely to repay the trouble of attention, which he read with avidity, and studied with the greatest assiduity. A new day of literature had begun to dawn upon Europe, and with delightful complacency he watched the progress of its rising sun. Pity that his learning and his talents had not moderated the pride which swelled in his bosom, and harshly displayed itself in his conduct. Dying at an age when many
men

men are in the prime of life, he left his library a monument of his taste and his learning, and a son the reverse of himself, at least in literary desires, who attentive only to the turbulent gratifications of sense, or the noisy din of warlike achievements, had not the least relish for the calmer and more pure enjoyments of literature. He looked down with ineffable contempt upon its pursuits, and since the death of his father, had never visited his library. His heir equally sensual, and equally averse to literary occupation, since the days of pupillage, had never employed an hour in the cultivation of literature. Conrad and Matilda remained thus undisturbed in possession of the library, where day after day, they together read, mused, and reflected ; now with Homer soaring to the sublimest heights of imagination,

gination, accompanying Virgil through fields of delightful and varied scenery, or catching with rapture the poetic fire of Horace; now unfolding the historic page, to experience the mingled sensations of horror and delight, complacency and regret, and now amid the contemplations of philosophy, imbibing acuteness of judgment, and comprehension of understanding.

The knowledge Matilda thus acquired was more than the Baron intended; he only wished her to become a proficient in music, singing, and dancing, and the graces of polite demeanor and conversation, that in the intervals of languor, the exercise of her accomplishments might serve as a new enjoyment, and whilst they prevented the weariness attendant upon the languid sensations of satiety, might operate as a stimulus

stimulus, and rouse the sated voluptuary to new enjoyment. With this view, several females had been educated at the expence of the Baron, and now resided in the East Tower of his mansion, subservient to his call, and submissive to his will. But even variety itself had lost its charms by repetition, and in spite of his voluptuous care, satiety, and disgust, added to remorse, with all their accumulated horrors embittered his moments, and to every languid hour attached its attendant misery. But despising penitence, and endeavouring by still deeper draughts of sensuality to intoxicate his mind, and deaden his feelings, he impatiently waited for the completion of Matilda's education, when her beauty and graceful accomplishments might bury in oblivion,

vion, at least for the moment, the gloomy horrors of his mind.

Her preceptors endeavoured with consummate art to seduce her mind from the contemplation of virtue, and to unite a passive voluptuousness, with an active desire to please, but their efforts were vain. A natural delicacy of sentiment averted her mind with horror from the consideration of vice, and not only deprived their insidious precepts of the intended effect, but wrested them to the purposes of virtue and innocent amusement. It was Conrad who enabled her to dive into the depths of philosophy, and feast upon the stores of literature.— The Baron, to shield his designs from observation, had been compelled to employ preceptors capable of initiating her supposed brother into the learning of the age. From them he quickly derived
the

the acquirements of language, and those he constantly imparted to his beloved Matilda, until she also was capable of partaking in the enjoyments of literature, and though not possessed of the same strength of intellect, derived an equal degree of pleasure from the participation.

Conrad who, at the first sound of the Baron's determination, had perceived his sinister intentions, and from the tendency of the sentiments which the instructors of Matilda frequently endeavoured to infuse into her mind, became confirmed in his suppositions, frequently warned her of the danger attendant upon her beauty. But Matilda, happy in the enjoyments of literature, and the society of Conrad, saw no danger immediately in view, and attributed the friendly warning of Conrad to a tender solicitude for her welfare, which

which made his perceptions outstrip the actual existence of circumstances. Conrad, however, thought much and deeply upon her situation. The danger with which her virtue was threatened, was to him evident. Her father was too much absorbed in the gratifications of the moment, to possess a mind capable of reflection, added to this, the kindness of the Baron had lulled him into security, and he would not have believed that he aimed at the seduction of his daughter. Colin was open and free, a lover of good living, and a votary of Bacchus. His breakfast was no sooner finished, than he thought of his dinner, and to prevent the tedium of expectation, would now and then, to pass away time, take a copious draught of good ale. His dinner ended, he began to think of his supper, frequent libations of ale served to fill up the

the

the vacant hours until he again sat down to the covered table, when a little eating, and more copious libations of ale finished him for the night, and left him just sense enough to guide himself to bed. Whilst Colin had regular employment, and limited means, he was sober and diligent; want of mechanical labour left him without any resource to pass away the tedious hours, and the plenty before him, added to his natural love of good living, made him a glutton and a sot. The mind of Annette was not equal to the foresight of Matilda's danger, and Conrad alone was her guardian and her friend. Frequently would he stray with his lovely charmer at the decline of day, and whilst they watched the setting sun gradually sinking beneath the horizon, until the lengthened shadows were lost in twilight, Conrad would remark upon the beauties

beauties of the prospect; then fixing his eyes upon Matilda, imagination took flight, and already he saw her bereft of her innocence, a prey to the seductive arts of the Baron. Horror in the thought, he would involuntarily shudder, and awake from a deep reverie, of which he had been unconscious. Matilda observed these frequent fits of absence, and wondered at the cause. He became pensive and sad, and frequently revolved in his mind the means of rescuing his beloved Matilda from the danger which awaited her, but irresolution hovered over him, and he could determine on no plan, through the means of which she might escape. It would perhaps have been difficult to have carried any into effect: to convince Colin and Annette of its expediency, would have been absolutely impossible,

impossible, and to attempt it without their knowledge, must be futile and absurd.

Matilda by her gentle temper and amiable demeanour, had won the heart of Margaret, whom Jaques frequently visited; reserve was not in his nature, and frequently he would talk to her of the independence he expected, when a happy union should crown his love.— Margaret interrogated him concerning the source from whence he looked for his wealth to arise; and Jaques would frequently utter half sentences, which created wonder and surprize in her mind, and made her ponder upon his words, until she could no longer assign them any meaning. But he had just resolution enough to refrain from informing her of the Baron's real designs relative to Matilda; and the latter was led insensibly to the brink of the precipice

pice whilst imagining she was still upon sure ground. The Baron had frequently employed himself in considering what should be the manner of his first interview with Matilda. A formal introduction would at once have betrayed his intentions, whilst he recollected his promise to Jaques, and wished if possible to evade its performance by administering in this case to himself, without being indebted to his valet for any further exertions, or become dependent upon him for the concealment of any secret. At length he determined to meet her, as if accidentally, and thus begin a conversation. With this intention, he descended from his magnificent apartments, and frequently walked about for a considerable time, to the no small terror of his domestics, who with palpitating hearts ran quickly out of his way, and sheltered

F

themselves

themselves in their respective apartments. But Matilda was not to be met with. Had he walked into his library he would have found her; but that was a place where he had not the most distant expectation of seeing her, and the love of literature never tempted him to enter within its walls. Here frequently Matilda and Conrad sat treasuring in their memories the truths of history and of science, or incorporating with their reflections the maxims of virtue and of morality; whilst the man who intended to become the deliberate seducer of Matilda, paced before the door with solemn step and a mind alternately soothed by pleasing expectation, and agitated by dreadful remembrances; and often though intent upon the contemplation of the beautiful object who had fascinated his senses, a sudden and gloomy horror would

would dart across his mind, starting and looking back with affrighted air, he was loth to turn again and continue his walk. Matilda never quitted the library till the Baron had retired to dinner, and thus for the present she escaped him.

Arthur de Umfreville had ranged himself with a body of his father's retainers under the royal standard, and had been absent from his paternal mansion during the whole period of Matilda's residence at the castle. He now led home the diminished numbers of those who had accompanied him, and arriving late in the evening, the setting sun had already begun to gild the distant spire, and the wearied labourers upon his father's extensive domains to anticipate the domestic comforts of the cottage, when Arthur at the head of the retainers of Umfreville, approached the castle where the Baron had

long expected him, and now came forth with every splendour of dress and pomp of attendance to meet the heir of his house. Neither possessed those delicate and refined feelings which could engraft the complacency of delight upon their interview, and after a formal and ceremonious reception the retainers who had followed Arthur were dismissed, and he rode with his father slowly to the castle, which after a short conversation he quitted to take a walk in the environs. The evening was peculiarly inviting, the sun being now set, and a coolness diffused through the atmosphere, which, after the heat of the day, attached the most pleasing sensations to every beautiful prospect that caught the eye. Proceeding without any settled purpose he arrived at a hill, up which he ascended, where on its summit sat Conrad and Matilda in earnest conversation,

conversation. The beauty of the latter bereft him of all power to move; he gazed in rapture, devoured every charm, and dwelt upon every feature. Matilda happening to cast her eyes towards the spot where he stood, and perceiving a youth in the warlike habiliments of a chief, intently gazing upon her, blushed and became confused. Conrad directing his sight to the same place glanced it upon Arthur, and immediately recollected his person. Observing his eager looks directed towards Matilda, he immediately arose, and seizing her hand raised her from the ground, and led her back towards the castle, seeming not to have observed the heir of Umfreville. Arthur followed them at a distance, and at length saw them enter the castle. Upon the rack to become acquainted with the name and situation of the interesting female whose charms

had fascinated his mind, he eagerly bent his steps homewards, where he no sooner arrived than he sent for Jaques and anxiously enquired who it was he had so ardently gazed at. Jaques was somewhat embarrassed by the eagerness with which the enquiry was made, but at length informed him she was educating at the expence and under the protection of his father. Arthur knew too well the meaning those words were intended to convey, and sighed at the answer he received. The expressive beauty of Matilda had fired his breast with a passion which he perhaps might call love, but which an observer of human nature, critically exact in appropriating to each sensation of the mind its true denomination, would have described by another name. The reply of Jaques conveyed to the mind of Arthur a disappointment of those hopes

hopes which he had instantaneously formed at the moment of contemplating the charms of the lovely Matilda. He became absorbed in reverie, repeatedly revolving in his mind the probabilities of gratifying that passion which agitated his breast; he could form no specific plan, but still thought it was possible to convey her secretly away to some place where she might remain concealed from the knowledge of his father, and he remain ignorant of the person who had wrested her from his grasp. But, alas! he only thought of rescuing her from the abyss into which she was in danger of being plunged, to dash her down the precipice that frowned terrifically at her side; his only object was to satiate those passions which in common with his father he possessed, and to the gratification of which, in common with his father, no principle of virtue hindered

him from giving an unlimited rein. But it was at best a romantic scheme; his father was too eagle-eyed in every circumstance that concerned his sensual enjoyments, to allow much hope of its success, whilst a discovery would expose him to all the effects of that anger which he deprecated and feared. Agitated and disappointed he paced about the room, with now hurried, now slow step, and could not resolve upon any plan by means of which his own base purposes might succeed in preference to those of his father.

The night was spent in perturbed sleep, the morn summoned him to the chace; its hurry and bustle, its cheerfulness and its hope, for a while banished from his mind the lovely image that haunted his repose, but again arriving within the walls of the castle it returned
with

with redoubled force; with anxious eagerness he had entered the mansion in hopes of meeting with Matilda, disappointed in the expectation he walked backwards and forwards absorbed in thought, scarcely conscious of his movements until he forgot the hour of dinner. The Baron concluding he was detained by the length of the pursuit, waited a little time, and at length supposing it would be useless to detain the dinner longer, as his son might have been led to a great distance by the superior fleetness of the stag, sat down to table. Arthur was still pacing below, absorbed in reverie, and did not observe Conrad pass him; Matilda happened to remain a minute or two longer than her lover, and then quitted the library for the purpose of returning to the apartments of her parents; it was just at the moment she had shut the library door that Arthur

arrived at the spot; he started at the sight of her, but immediately recollected himself and addressed her, "Lovely Damsel" he began; Matilda had turned towards her apartments, when the sound of a voice induced her to turn again her face, and starting at the sight of the Cavalier, whom she had observed gazing so intently upon her the day before, he continued, "Lovely Damsel, your exquisite beauty diffuses a cheerfulness throughout the castle, which dissipates all its former gloom." Matilda blushed and curtsied; "it is a phenomenon I little expected to contemplate upon my arrival here after the fatigues of warlike achievements, but for those labours the pleasing sensations it creates are an ample remuneration." Matilda blushed more deeply, the lilies of her face were tinged with the blush of the rose-bud, and

and her beauty was heightened by the confusion ; the style of hyperbolical compliment, with which she had been addressed, was novel and unexpected ; she knew not what to answer, nor the object of such an address : he still continued, “ the sight
“ of so lovely a Damsel is indeed unexpected ; to what cause am I to attribute your cheering appearance in this
“ dismal mansion.” Matilda was unacquainted with the person of the heir of Umfreville, but, surprized at his question, she ventured to speak in return.
“ May I ask, Sir, the name of the Chevalier who hath honoured me with this
“ notice.” “ I am the only son of the
“ Lord of this castle.” “ In answer to
“ your question, my Lord, me and my
“ parents are indebted to the kindness
“ and benevolence of your noble father
“ for the asylum we here enjoy, and the

“ benefits we partake of; my father is
“ an humble retainer of the Baron de
“ Umfreville, and the beneficence of his
“ Lord has released him from labour for
“ the remainder of his life.” The digni-
fied humility with which these words were
uttered by Matilda struck an awe into
the mind of Arthur in spite of himself;
the sinister intentions which lurked be-
neath the kindness and benevolence of
his father he was well acquainted with,
and secretly cursed his depraved duplicity,
whilst himself was about to commence
a career of deceit equally criminal, for he
now conceived the project of exposing to
her the designs of his father, and then ensur-
ing her gratitude, by delivering her from
his fell grasp, in order that himself might
the more easily triumph over that virtue
which he was only angry his father should
rival him in the destruction of. Though
some-

somewhat awed by her manner he persisted in his purpose. "Your situation
" may be humble, fair Damsel, but, how-
" ever inferior it is, you are intitled to
" all the protection that honour can af-
" ford;" but (lowering his voice) that
" protection, I fear, you will not here
" experience." Matilda was struck by his
words; he seemed from his manner to
take a peculiar interest in her fate, and
a mystery hung over his last expression,
which, coinciding with the repeated
warning hints she had received from the
penetrating Conrad, darted into her mind
the most gloomy and fearful apprehen-
sions; apprehensions the more terrific, be-
cause, fearing the worst, and having no
well defined object to fix themselves
upon, or to guard against; she involun-
tarily trembled. Arthur perceived the
impression he had made upon her mind;
he

he perceived the anxious curiosity he had excited, and immediately determined to postpone its gratification. Matilda looked at him with inquiring eyes, whilst he still continued, "Lovely Matilda, we shall be interrupted here, meet me alone in the library to-morrow morning at eight, and I will display to you the precipice upon the brink of which you are unconsciously standing;" with these words he quitted her abruptly, and ascended to the dining-room where his father had some time finished his repast. Arthur excused the lateness of his appearance by relating a marvellous tale of a long and fatiguing chace; whilst Matilda remained at the library door, where the voice of Arthur had first struck her ear, for many minutes absorbed in a deep reverie, "but that protection I fear you will not here experience" still vibrated upon

upon her ear and fixed the contemplation of her mind. Surely, she thought, the Baron de Umfreville was not such a monster as to make the kindness and benevolence he had displayed towards her father a mask to conceal insidious designs upon her honour, and enable him the more effectually to perpetrate his intentions. Impossible! the world did not contain so depraved a villain; it surely could not be Conrad who entertained designs against her honour; then how should the young Baron de Umfreville be acquainted with it. Some other danger must await her, but what could it be? An undefined suspicion took possession of her mind; her judgment was turned adrift upon the wide ocean of conjecture, and found no friendly haven where it could securely repose.

Conrad could not imagine the reason
that

that detained Matilda so long, and anxiously expecting her every moment, at first thought some favourite author occasioned her stay. At length, becoming alarmed, he hastily retraced his steps towards the library, at the door of which he found Matilda still deeply absorbed in thought, and gently seized her hand, before she was aware of his approach. Matilda started and directed a look at him, of which he could not conceive the meaning; the winning smile with which she used to greet him at his approach was absent, a gloom hung over her countenance, and an enquiring suspicion rested in her eye, which fixed his mind in surprise, and agitated him with fear, "My dear Matilda," said Conrad, "what has detained you so long after my departure, your stay began seriously to alarm me:" Matilda tenderly glanced upon him, and replied, "a fin-

“ a singular incident detained me, which I
“ will relate to you when we arrive at my
“ father’s apartment.” Thither they now
repaired, and Matilda soon found an opportunity of acquainting him with all the circumstances of the interview between her and Arthur de Umfreville. Its relation agitated the mind of Conrad with the most unpleasing sensations. The character of Arthur was unknown to him, for it was scarcely yet developed; and from the manner of his address to Matilda, and the interest he seemed to take in her welfare, he concluded that her beauty had inspired him with the tenderest sentiments of love, and influenced by this conclusion, he became tortured with all the pangs of jealousy. The heir of a vast estate and extensive domain to become her suitor, how was the plea of the humble, but faithful Conrad, to be attended to; her absence of
mind.

mind, when at the library door, rushed into his memory; alas! she was thinking of the noble youth who had so highly complimented her, and who seemed benevolently to step forward to rescue her from impending danger. That he too, by his unexpected abruptness, should wrest from her faithful lover the palm of warning her against the violation that threatened her honour, when the latter had foreseen it from the first, and repeatedly hinted it to the unsuspecting fair one, was too much; it overpowered his mind, and he cried out with a loud and tremulous voice "Do not meet him, for Heaven's sake, " my dear Matilda, don't meet him." The trembling earnestness of his manner alarmed Matilda, new dangers crowded upon her imagination, she seemed beset on all sides with dreadful chasms, that threatened her with destruction; in trembling

bling agitation she looked at Conrad, who gazed upon her with a wildness that still more alarmed her, whilst in accents equally wild he continued, " my dearest Matilda, dangers croud thick upon thy devoted head, let us away, let us escape from this dreadful mansion, ere it be too late." Matilda trembled at his words, " How," said the lovely maid, " are we to escape, when the domains of Umfreville extend for miles around; and before we can gain a place of security, our flight will be discovered, and a successful pursuit involve us in new and more terrible dangers; but pray calm your agitation, and explain why you so ardently wish me not to meet the young Baron de Umfreville."— Jealousy had seized a strong hold in the mind of Conrad, and her question only served to strengthen its possession, but unwilling

unwilling to avow it, he replied, " there
" may be danger in meeting him, and
" he has nothing new to inform you of;
" the danger which he alludes to, and
" with which he wishes to make you ac-
" quainted, is the violation of your
" honour, which it has long been the in-
" tention of the Baron to carry into ef-
" fect."

The entrance of Annette interrupted the conversation, and the departure of Conrad left Matilda at leisure to meditate upon his language and behaviour. He had frequently hinted at the danger which he now more explicitly delineated; but still her unsuspecting mind could not imagine so much depravity to reside in the heart of the benevolent Baron de Umfreville; it was Conrad's anxious love that betrayed him into such a supposition. It must be some other
danger.

danger in which she was on the point of being involved, that the intended information of Arthur related to: curiosity stimulated and interested her mind, and she resolved to meet him notwithstanding the agitated desire of her lover. The hour appointed, was previous to that at which Conrad and herself usually repaired to the library, and it would be easy for her to proceed there alone without his knowledge.

The remainder of the day was spent in the company of her father and mother, and Conrad, who appeared pensive and gloomy, and was frequently absent and absorbed in thought. He revolved in his mind the possibility of an escape from that danger which was now imminent, but so many impediments lay in the way that he could form no plan likely to succeed in the execution. The parents of Matilda

Matilda would have thought it criminal even to hint at the supposed sinister designs of the Baron, and could not have been induced to consent to an escape, of which the necessity was to them not in the least obvious; whilst herself appeared adverse to such a proposal, and why, the enquiry was frequently instituted in the mind of Conrad, and often jealousy attributed her apparent desire to remain to the impression the person and manners of Arthur had made upon her heart; but frequently candour attributed it to its right source, a disbelief in the vicious intentions of the Baron: The afternoon was spent by Conrad in these enquiries and suppositions, but unable to arrive at any determination or form a resolution, he at length retired to his chamber a prey to uneasy sensations and gloomy forebodings. Matilda likewise retired to rest; the night was

was spent in broken slumbers and agitated sleep, and the morning no sooner dawned than she arose, tired rather than refreshed with the interrupted sleep she had experienced, and anxiously watched the rising of the sun; it seemed to be peculiarly tardy and later than usual, with difficulty she persuaded herself that it had not before arisen, obscured by a cloud; at length it majestically appeared, and the tremulous chorus of gratitude from the surrounding trees vibrated upon her ear. Matilda in spite of her anxiety was penetrated with rapture and delight; with gratitude and veneration; a prayer poured forth from the fullness of her heart cheered her mind, and calmed the tumult of her spirits; and she appeared at the breakfast table with a cheerfulness that delighted Conrad, and made him forget for a moment every sensation of jealousy and danger.

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

THE appointed hour swiftly approached, and with difficulty she concealed the perturbation which now affected her spirits; at length it was nearly arrived, and unable to stay any longer she slipped away unperceived, and repaired to the library; no one was yet there, and she took up a book to divert the passing moment, but the agitation of her mind was too great to allow her to abstract it, and she was compelled to throw it aside, and wait with palpitating heart for the approach of Arthur; at length the door opened, and entered not Arthur, but the Baron de Umfreville.

Matilda

Matilda had never seen the Baron, except when he called in disguise at the cottage of her father, and therefore did not know who the personage was that entered the library; she had taken little notice of the person who had accompanied Jaques, but the face immediately struck her as one she had before seen, though could not recollect where. He was surprised at meeting with Matilda in a place where he had never thought of seeking for her, but rejoiced at the opportunity which now occurred when he least expected it. Matilda was not long before she guessed from the dignity of deportment and splendour of dress of the person who stood before her, that he could be no other than the Baron de Umfreville, and respectfully arose from her seat for the purpose of retiring from the library. The Baron perceiving her intention im-

G

mediately

mediately advanced, and seizing her hand, whilst he rapturously gazed upon the trembling maid, said, “ lovely angelic
“ Matilda, I have heard much of your
“ exquisite beauty and delicately proportioned form, but the sight of your
“ charms far exceeds the portrait my own
“ sanguine imagination had formed.” Matilda trembled and was agitated; a thousand thoughts rushed at once into her mind, and agitated her frame. The Baron pressing her hand warmly between his, continued, “ I know not which
“ most to admire, the delicate and admirable proportion which appears in
“ your shape, or the exquisite loveliness
“ that beams from your countenance;
“ and had I the task of pourtraying a
“ Venus, you should be the beautiful
“ model.” The last expression of the Baron offended the nice delicacy of Matilda;

tilda; to the name of Venus she had annexed ideas of not the most virtuous nature, and such a mode of expression seemed to imply a doubt of her innocence, which her high notions of female honour could not brook. A frown upon her lovely brow at once exhibited her anger, and displayed a severe dignity, which disconcerted the Baron, in spite of his hardened depravity; she replied, “ my
“ beauty is undeserving of those enco-
“ miums, my Lord,” (for she now certainly concluded it was the Baron de Umfreville) “ which your Lordship has
“ been pleased to bestow upon it. It is only
“ a temporary advantage, which a thou-
“ sand accidents may destroy, and which
“ is beneath the applause of wisdom.” The dignified innocence, displayed by Matilda, was so opposite to the manners he expected from a girl placed under

that tuition which he had employed, that he felt himself in some measure disappointed, though his passions were still inflamed by the contemplation of her beauty, and a desire to triumph over that dignity of soul, which beamed in the eyes of Matilda, and made the contemptible mind of the Baron shrink within itself; he was a little embarrassed, but again proceeded. “ The enjoyment of the
“ present moment is all we can aspire to,
“ and that it is in the power of beauty
“ eminently to heighten and assist; for
“ wisdom only consists in passing away
“ the fleeting hours, with the least possible weariness and lassitude.” The sophistry of the Baron made no impression on the mind of Matilda, who immediately replied: “ Wisdom, my Lord, will
“ only own those hours that are employed in the contemplation and practice
“ tice

“ tice of virtue.” True,” said the Baron, with a duplicity to which he had been long accustomed, “ but virtue is “ frequently most displayed in submitting “ to necessity. The end to be attained “ by human actions, is happiness; and “ to attain that happiness, there is frequently a necessity to gratify inclinations which would otherwise prey upon “ the human frame and corrode its existence. To submit to this necessity, “ instead of struggling against it only to “ endure misery, is true virtue, although “ some cold philosopher may have called “ it vice.”—“ If, my Lord, we were “ only to exist a few fleeting years and “ then be annihilated, to study only the “ enjoyment of the moment, might be “ virtue; but—” The Baron felt a terror overwhelm his mind, in spite of the lovely object he was eagerly contemplating,

G 3

plating, and anxious to put a stop to a conversation which seemed likely rather to increase than to dissipate his fears, prevented Matilda from finishing her period, by leading her forward, and requesting her to take a view of the spacious rooms which the castle contained, and which she had never yet seen. Matilda was agitated, the Baron held fast her hand, and she knew not what to do, she wished to free herself from his grasp but knew not how. At length, she said, whilst he led her on towards the staircase, "my condition, my Lord, is too lowly to entitle me to such a mark of your Lordship's condescension; permit me to retire to my humble apartment." "Your beauty and accomplishments, my lovely Matilda," replied the Baron, "would adorn any situation, however dignified or splendid."

“ did.” By this time they were arrived at the foot of the staircase, up which the Baron ascended, holding Matilda fast by the hand, and, with the utmost politeness and suavity of manners, leading her along; an universal trembling seized the lovely maid, and she would gladly have retired, but knew not how to escape the polite importunity of the Baron.

They slowly advanced, her noble conductor at every turn looking courteously around, and, intreating her to be cautious of her steps, and at length arrived at the summit. Matilda looked back and sighed, presentiments of the most fearful nature agitated her mind; Conrad seemed to stand before her and intreat her to return; all the friendly hints he had given her, his agitated behaviour on the preceding day, and the mysterious conduct of Arthur, all arrayed themselves in fearful re-

membrane and abandoned her to terror and affright; she turned pale, and hardly would her tottering limbs perform their office. The Baron led her through a magnificent suite of apartments each decorated in a splendid and peculiar style, but the beauty of which, Matilda absorbed in reflection was incapable of enjoying. At length opening a pair of beautiful folding doors, he led her into a room fitted up in a more magnificent style than any he had yet exhibited to her view. Couches and sofas covered with the gayest silks and sparkling with embroidered gold were arrayed in fanciful order around it. The tapestry displaying in fascinating colours the most voluptuous scenes crimsoned the cheek of Matilda with the blush of modest shame, whilst the ceiling continued the same meretricious allusions, and fixed her lovely eyes in confusion upon the floor,

floor, but even there to be insulted with a repetition of the same elegant but voluptuous scenes. Disgusted and offended she turned them towards the windows, but only to receive additional pain; the light was admitted through transparencies, which displaying some fascinating scene of meretricious love received an additional heightening from the vivid tints that played upon the figures. The frames of the mirrors which completed the furniture of the room were similarly adorned, and the table was inlaid in the same style. Matilda confused and agitated, and viewing with contempt and horror the man who had led her to the contemplation of scenes at which innocence must revolt, made a violent effort to disengage her hand and retire from the spot, determining to fly with eager haste to her paternal apartment, and die rather than again

be allured into the presence of the Baron. He had foreseen such an attempt, and whilst with calm complacency and extreme politeness he held her hand, it was grasped so tight that all the efforts of Matilda could not release it, and overpowered by her fears she screamed in agony. The Baron appeared not to notice her scream, or her struggle, and with a similar suavity of manners intreated her to be seated, at the same time leading, or rather pulling, her forwards towards a sofa which stood before them. He immediately seated himself, but in the act of doing so his grasp of the hand of Matilda became less forcible and she found herself disengaged; with trembling eagerness she flew to the door, but it was fastened by a secret spring, and all her efforts, the exertions of despair, failed to uncloset it. A pair of folding doors, on the opposite side, attracted

tracted her attention, and agonized she flew to them with a similar hope of escape, but, alas! these too were fast; no hope remained, and Matilda clasped her hands in the agony of despair. The Baron sat coolly and unconcerned upon the sofa; he knew she could not escape, and he considered her despair as a matter of course. As a last resource she knelt to the Baron, and in piteous accents intreated his permission to retire to her parents. The distress in which she was plunged gave a new fascination to her beauty, and the throbbings of her bosom created alternate palpitations in the breast of the Baron. But that her agonizing accents should have penetrated him with emotions of pity would have been indeed a phenomenon; he rapturously gazed for a while upon the beauty which offered itself to his contemplation, and then rais-

ing her up with the utmost politeness, but calmest depravity, said " my lovely
" Matilda, you have here nothing to
" fear, permit me to prevail on you to
" accept of some refreshment;" Matilda, whose terror was increased by the cool indifference of the Baron, burst into a flood of tears and piteously wept, whilst Umfreville, who had regained her hand, and seated her beside him on the sofa, watched the heavings of her agitated bosom, and perceived new beauties in every throb. She obstinately refused all refreshment, and would again have knelt to the depraved character who calmly contemplated her distress, had not he prevented her. But again, in accents still more piteous, she begged and intreated permission to retire, pourtrayed in the most expressive language the anguish of her parents, and the distress of her brother,

ther, at her sudden disappearance and long stay ; but the Baron was too hackneyed in depravity to be moved by her intreaties, or by refusing them, to display at once the fell purpose which occupied his mind. In the most soothing accents he requested she would not be distressed, as she was perfectly safe, and no danger near to agitate her mind ; but Matilda was too well convinced of the extent of her danger, and sobbed with more distressful vehemence at the inattention with which her intreaties were received.

The Baron at length quitted her hand, and went to the folding doors opposite to those by which he and Matilda had entered ; the latter immediately ran to the last, and again endeavoured, with the strength of despair, to escape from the hateful room which had now become her prison, but all exertion was vain ; the
spring

spring which fastened them was to her unknown, and a much greater portion of strength than was possessed by the feeble Matilda would have failed to force them. He had shut the doors by which he had quitted the room, but soon they were again opened, and two females advanced voluptuously dressed, and looking all but chastity. Matilda again had recourse to intreaty, and implored them to assist her in escaping from her cruel imprisonment; again the distress of her parents, and her brother, was the theme; and again she piteously intreated their commiseration and assistance. They heard her with attention, but in accents that conveyed no hope to her mind, assured her she had nothing to fear. They had brought new apparel, which they requested she would put on, but Matilda resolutely refused to change her dress, and, persisting in her resolution, they

they were forced to desist. They requested her, however, to accept of some refreshment, calmly adding, they feared she was a little exhausted. Her agony of distress had, indeed, exhausted her spirits, and she accepted of a little fruit which lay upon the table, but no intreaty could prevail upon her to taste any of the liquors with which it was plentifully spread. The females, who had entered the room, began a conversation with some degree of spirit and vivacity, though tinged with a boldness, which disgusted the innocent simplicity of Matilda; but perceiving she noticed neither them, nor their sprightly chat, they arose from their seats, each taking a hand, and rather forced than led her along to the adjoining chamber, and from thence into an inner one, where was a bed and toilet, together with all the conveniencies of repose; but although

though not fitted up in the same splendid style as the chamber in which she had endured such agonizing distress, yet all breathing the same tainted air of voluptuousness. This chamber, they informed her, was designed for her repose, and likewise for her residence, whenever she chose to retire to its solitude. They then invited her to a repast, at which they assured her she would meet with agreeable company; but Matilda, absorbed in grief, persisted in remaining where she was, and finding it in vain to press their request, they left her to her own reflections, and quitted the room.

Her first care, after their departure, was to fasten the door, and then with distressful anxiety she inspected the chamber, in hopes of discovering some means of escape, but in vain would the most scrutinizing eye have searched, the precaution

caution of the Baron had been too carefully exerted to allow of the most distant prospect of deliverance. There was no door, except that by which she had entered, and the windows, even had they not been carefully barred, were at too great a distance from the ground without, to allow of any rational attempt to escape by them, added to which they were at some distance from the external wall, in which openings were made of the same dimensions with the windows, to admit the light and air. Thus disappointed, she sunk down upon a chair in an agony of despair, which may be conceived, but cannot be expressed; now she blamed herself for not promptly flying from the castle, when Conrad gave her the signal of danger, now for her credulity in believing the Baron devoid of depravity; now for not raising the household

hold by her screams, when the perfidious monster was leading her up the staircase; now the most terrific apprehensions filled and agitated her mind, until she started with horror, and fancied she heard the depraved violator of her honour bursting open the door that separated them, for the purposes of brutality. She paced the room in anguish and despair, until seized with faintness, which hinted the necessity of refreshment, and recollecting the invitation of the females who escorted her into the room, she determined to quit it, for the purpose of obtaining that of which she was greatly in need.

Let us now return, for a short time, to Conrad, to Arthur de Umfreville, and the parents of Matilda. A rumour had arisen, and reached the ear of the Baron de Umfreville, that his enemy, the Baron de Montacute had armed a
body

body of his retainers, and was about to make an hostile inroad into the domains of the former. Immediately upon the receipt of this intelligence, the Baron de Umfreville ordered his son to arm a number of his retainers, with the utmost secrecy, and march to meet the attack. Arthur, cursing such an event, was forced to comply, he had no valid reason to plead for refusing to obey his father's commands, and ill health would only have been considered as another term for cowardice. Thus circumstanced, he gave the necessary orders in the evening, made preparations for his departure, and after a short slumber was compelled to depart privately in the night without the knowledge of the household, and thus was prevented from attending his appointment in the library.

The Baron had been unusually disturbed

turbed by terrific dreams, and after passing a disagreeable night, arose earlier than he had for a long time before, and Jaques having ignorantly placed some books of music belonging to his master in the library, the latter, who was at a loss how to employ his time, determined to go himself in search of them, and hence ensued his unexpected, and to Matilda, unfortunate, appearance in that repository of literature, which had not witnessed his presence for many years before.

Conrad, when he discovered the absence of Matilda, concluded she had repaired to the library for the purpose of having an interview with Arthur de Umfreville, in pursuance of the latter's appointment, and her conduct, in this instance afforded a proof to his imagination, that the fine figure of Arthur, the elegance of his deportment, and the interest

terest he seemed to take in her welfare, had made an impression upon the heart of Matilda, which threatened to efface that engraven by his own love. His mind flew off upon the tangent of jealousy, and remained for some time exposed to all the tortures of suspicion; he paced his chamber in unutterable anguish, and frequently in imagination saw the youthful Arthur kneeling at the feet of his beloved Matilda, inspiring her with love, and exciting in her breast the most tender sentiments of affection.—Imagination winged its way, and saw them united in indissoluble bonds, and himself cast off to endure the unutterable pangs of disappointed love. At length he determined to repair to the library, his beloved haunt, where he found a solace for his cares, and an useful employment for his time. But perhaps, Arthur

thur was still there infusing into the bosom of Matilda all the tenderness of his sentiments: excruciating thought! he lingered, and did not dare to proceed, such a sight would overpower all the firmness of his mind; it was now more than an hour beyond the usual time of his and Matilda's entrance into the library; he started up, and suddenly resolved to go, trembling he opened the door, and hardly dared to look forwards, until the vacancy of the apartment forcibly struck his eye. Surprise for a moment deprived him of recollection; at length he concluded she had returned to her father's apartment; to that he immediately proceeded, where he found Colin much indisposed from the effect of frequent potations of ale, and Annette sitting by his side, but Matilda was not there. The perturbation of his mind

was

was visible in his countenance in spite of himself, and so observed by Annette, she eagerly enquired if any thing was the matter. Conrad recollected himself, and thinking she might, perhaps, be in her own apartment, would not give unnecessary pain to her parents, and therefore answering in the negative the question of Annette, he sat down and chatted for a short time with apparent ease, until the torture of his mind became too great to be concealed, and he abruptly quitted the room. Again in sorrowful suspense, he bent his steps towards the library, but Matilda was not to be found. A ray of hope still shot through the gloom, and he went to the door of her apartment, where he knocked, and receiving no answer, opened the door, but Matilda was not there. In the same spirit every apartment belonging to the household

household was searched, and with similar ill
 success. The last glimmering of hope now
 fled from his mind, and left it involved
 in all the darkness of despair; but still
 involved in uncertainty and suspense, he
 knew not to what cause the disappearance
 of Matilda ought to be attributed, and
 whilst the decision of his judgment re-
 specting it vibrated between the machin-
 ations of the Baron, and the love of his
 son, as he walked along the passage,
 he was accosted by Jaques, who ob-
 served, "It is a fine day for the Lord Ar-
 "thur." "Why for the Lord Arthur?"
 retorted Conrad, with a considerable
 degree of impatience! "What, do you
 "not know of his departure?" replied
 Jaques. A servant at this moment sum-
 moned Jaques to the presence of the
 Baron, who immediately obeyed the
 command, and left Conrad a prey to
 tortures

tortures, which all the refinement of cruelty, operating upon bodily suffering, would have failed to inflict. Not a doubt now existed in his mind that Matilda had departed with Arthur de Umfreville : “ Faithless and perfidious maiden, to smile upon my agitated soul, when she meditated to wound it with the keenest arrows of cruelty.”— Scarcely conscious whither he was going, he approached again the apartment of Colin, where he and Annette were still in the same position, and had no sooner entered it, than he sunk into a chair, overpowered by the agony of his reflections, regardless of surrounding objects. The state in which he appeared, alarmed the parents of Matilda, not only for him, but they began now seriously to imagine that some dreadful accident had befallen their daughter;

H

he

he recovered a little, and her mother in tremulous tones asked, what was become of Matilda: "Alas I know not," was the reply of Conrad, which plunged them at once into the deepest distress. Conrad at length, recovered sufficient calmness to relate all the circumstances attendant upon her disappearance, with which he was acquainted, and the certain conclusion which must be drawn from them of her flight with Arthur. His relation, whilst it relieved them from suspense, only added to the poignancy of their grief.

The clangor of arms was now heard without, and Conrad ignorant of the cause, ran to enquire, when to his no small surprize, he saw Arthur de Umfreville, at the head of the Baron's retainers. Conrad now learnt the reason of his expedition, and that the rumour hav-

ing

ing proved unfounded, his return had been accelerated. It instantly occurred to Conrad, that the expedition of Arthur was a pretext, and that he had carried away Matilda by force, and deposited her in some place guarded by his satellites, where he alone might have access. The supposition gathered irresistible force from concurring circumstances, and with difficulty was Conrad restrained, by prudential considerations, from attacking, even at the head of his armed band, the man whom he now considered as the brutal despoiler of Matilda.

The retainers were dismissed, and Arthur entered his paternal mansion, whilst Conrad struggling with impatient anger, at length found means to speak to him, and requested a private interview, saying in an angry tone, "I am the brother

H 2 of

“ of Matilda.” Arthur, surpris’d at the request, hesitated a moment; but considering that his designs upon her could not have been discovered, and at the same time with a view to the carrying into effect those sinister intentions, wishing to conciliate her family, acceded to the desire, and dismissing his attendants, retired with Conrad into the library. The place forcibly struck the mind of the latter, and whilst it added to the poignancy of his grief, gave vehemence to his anger: they were no sooner alone than Conrad scarcely able to moderate the indignation that swelled in his breast, with difficulty, assumed some humility, and said, “ Where, Lord Arthur, have you “ carried my sister ?” Arthur, amazed at a question so unexpected, hesitated and looked at Conrad, as if waiting for that explanation which himself was called upon to

to give. The latter considering the hesitation and silence of Arthur as convincing proofs of his guilt, could no longer stifle the flame that agitated his mind, and drawing his dagger from his belt, called out with the most terrific vehemence, "Villain, tell me where she is, or by St. Mark, thou shalt not go out here alive." At the same time advancing with threatening aspect, and menacing action. Arthur seriously alarmed for his life, mechanically drew his sword, and thus prevented the nearer approach of his exasperated adversary. It was now rendered evident to the former, by the words of Conrad, that Matilda had disappeared, no cause was adequate to the production of such an event, but the execution of some scheme planned for that purpose by his father, and no doubt remained in his mind, that either by means

of force or fraud she was immured in the East Tower, which was known to be appropriated solely to the pleasures of the Baron, and completely inaccessible to all except himself. Cursing the too successful wiles of his father, and believing he had been sent upon his morning's expedition, for the sole purpose of preventing any exertions of his from intercepting the views of the Baron, he immediately conceived, that the only remaining chance of succeeding in his designs, depended upon his persuading her brother that his passion for her was honorable, and that he ardently wished to be united to her in the holy bonds of matrimony, thus inducing Conrad to aid the execution of those plans which he might form for the purpose of rescuing her from the violation of his father, to gratify his own inclination. Influenced by these considerations,

ations, he replied to the anger of Conrad
 with a calm firmness; "Conrad, you are
 " mistaken, I am not the unprincipled
 " robber who has basely torn the lovely
 " Matilda from the arms of her parents,
 " and the affection of her brother; but
 " I much fear a near relation of mine is:
 " and the suspicions of my mind arise
 " into a conviction, that she is immured
 " in yonder tower, and destined to be
 " offered up a helpless victim upon the
 " altar of my father's pleasures: Assist
 " me in those endeavours I am deter-
 " mined to make, for the purpose of
 " rescuing her from brutal violation,
 " and your reward will be ample, inde-
 " pendent of the pleasure you must ex-
 " perience in having a beloved sister
 " restored to your embrace, and in see-
 " ing that sister the wife of the heir of
 " Umfreville." The earnestness of Ar-

thur completely deceived the pretended brother of Matilda, and he actually supposed that an honourable passion for her really existed in the breast of the former ; and though its declaration struck a dagger to his heart, yet the thought of assisting in rescuing his beloved Matilda, from the dangers that threatened her innocence, and her honour, overcame every other consideration ; and convinced of the sincerity of Arthur in his relation of the situation in which she was placed, he replied, sheathing his dagger, and assuming an humble deportment, whilst Arthur deposited his sword again in its scabbard, “ I hope your lordship will pardon the rudeness of my anger : ” — “ Mention it not,” interrupted Arthur, “ We are friends, united in a common cause ; and in endeavours for its success, let every spark of mutual anger
“ be

“ be extinguished ;” at the same time giving his hand to Conrad, and exulting in his mind at the success which had crowned his efforts to engage the assistance of the latter in the execution of a purpose, which had he known, he would have plunged his dagger into the bosom of the perfidious betrayer ; Conrad accepted his hand, rejoicing at the hope which now gleamed across his mind, that he might yet deliver Matilda from the merciless fangs of the Baron, added to the consolation of knowing, or at least having a probability, almost amounting to certainty of the place where she was confined ; but their mutual joy arising from different causes, was considerably damped by the difficulty and danger that attended every step they must take in pursuit of the object they had in view. They considered the subject for some time, and

various plans offered themselves to their notice, but no one which appeared well adapted to the end they aimed at. At length the lateness of the hour warned them to separate, and not having been able to agree upon any scheme, worthy of being carried into execution, they parted, with a mutual resolution of meeting again early on the morrow in the same place, for the purpose of further considering the means of attaining their object; and though the impatience of Conrad ill brooked delay, he was consoled by the assurance of Arthur, that from the firm virtue of Matilda the danger was not imminent, as the Baron would not have recourse to force, but as a last resort, and after repeated trials.

In the mean time Colin, distracted by his apprehensions for his daughter, ran from room to room bewailing and lamenting

lamenting her loss, in terms dictated by the deepest distress, and anxiously enquiring of every retainer in the household if they had seen, or heard of, Matilda. Her disappearance became the general topic of conversation, and could be accounted for by no one. Jaques, amongst the rest, became informed of the event, and his amazement soon gave way to affliction; all the hopes of independence, that had danced before his view, were now vanished, perhaps for ever. A suspicion entered into his mind, that the Baron had, unknown to him, conveyed her into his apartments, but it brought no relief to his distress, and hardly appeared to wear the face of credibility; not any one in the household knew what was become of her, and that the Baron should convey her away alone, without the knowledge of any of his retainers, seemed

scarcely within the bounds of possibility. Margaret was absorbed in grief at the loss of her mistress, for whom she had a real affection, and ran to Jaques to enquire of him where she was fled, but he had no information to give, and was himself the victim of distracting doubts and fears. A message, from the Baron, now summoned the afflicted Jaques to his presence, who went trembling with fear, and not daring to look forward to future events.

Colin, in the anguish of his grief, ascended the staircase where so lately his daughter was led reluctant by her vile seducer, and, gaining admission to the Baron, threw himself at his feet, and, in the wildest language, informed him of the sudden disappearance of his daughter. The Baron affected the utmost surprize, raised up the afflicted father from his humiliating

humiliating situation, and enquired minutely into the circumstances that had attended the mournful event. The latter, in sorrowful accents, related, in a tedious detail, every circumstance that he knew which had any reference to the event, whilst the Baron, with consummate hypocrisy, attended to the lengthened tale of the afflicted Colin, and, administering consolation to his mind, promised he would use his utmost endeavours to discover the place of her concealment, but gave him little hope of again beholding his daughter; some dreadful accident must, doubtless, have befallen her, and the most anxious pursuit would, most probably, only lead to the discovery of her pallid and lifeless corpse. Colin heard him, and wept anew, whilst the Baron assured him of an ample support for the remainder of his life, and dismissed him with numberless

berless expressions of kindness and beneficence.

It was now that he summoned Jaques to his presence, upon whose entrance trembling and afflicted, he assumed a stern severity in his manner, and haughtily demanded what was become of Matilda. Jaques, confused and agitated, looked upon the ground, and did not dare to answer. The Baron, with still greater sternness, again repeated the question, and Jaques at length replied, "she has suddenly disappeared, my Lord, and I know not where she is gone."—"Villain," retorted the Baron, "your life shall answer for your negligence; you was the superintendant of the household; she was under your peculiar care, and it is to your neglect her disappearance is to be attributed."—Jaques, overpowered by terror and dismay,

may, threw himself at the feet of the Baron, and pleaded his utter ignorance of her fate, and his innocence of the charge of negligence, and in plaintive accents intreated for mercy. The Baron affected to be convinced by his pleading, and melted by his sollicitations, said, "Your life shall be preserved, but you are degraded from the offices you hold in my household, and hence forward you will be nothing more than a *com-mon retainer*." Jaques again intreated, but in vain; his master was inexorable, and he was compelled to deliver up his keys, and pensively retire. The Baron now triumphed, with a considerable degree of exultation, at the success of his scheme, and in having outwitted, and completely deceived, his crafty domestic, Jaques. The parents of Matilda, and he doubted not her brother, as well as the

the rest of his household, had not the least suspicion of her confinement, whilst he had cancelled his obligations to Jaques, and would not be, in future, indebted to him for the concealment of any secret. It still remained to deceive the relatives of Matilda, and likewise his household, into a belief of her death, by some circumstances more cogent than suppositions; in what manner this must be done was a question of serious consideration, and he set himself to discuss it with much attention. For if he could, in this way, put the finishing stroke to his work of deception, Matilda would be securely his, without the least fear of her being, at any time, delivered by force, or fraud, from his tyrannic grasp.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

IT is now time to return to Matilda, whom we left after she had determined to quit her chamber in search of refreshment; in pursuance of which determination, she opened her door and advanced into the room into which she had been led out of that wherein she was fastened by the Baron. No one was there, and she anxiously sought for an outlet, by means of which she might escape. The folding doors that led to the Baron's apartments it was useless to try, but on another side of the room, she observed a door, which upon endeavouring to open, obeyed

obeyed her efforts, and led to a passage. Traversing this with trembling step and palpitating heart, she at length came to a flight of stairs:—Joy beamed in her countenance, with eager haste she descended to the bottom, when she found herself in another passage, from whence doors opened into several apartments; into each of these she entered, and examined them all with the most anxious hope; but cruel disappointment! the windows were all barred in the same manner, and at a similar distance from the external air as those in her apartment; and no outlet was to be discovered leading either into the remaining part of the Castle, or the open air, except a massy door locked and strongly bolted, which it was impossible for her to unlock or open. The only remaining hope of the unfortunate Matilda rested in re-
ascending

ascending the staircase, having observed it was continued beyond the floor on which her chamber was situate. Arriving at the passage from whence she had commenced her descent, no one appeared, and she proceeded up the stairs until she had reached another passage opening into several chambers, but all blocked up in the same manner. She ascended to the top of the staircase, examining every apartment in the way, but the search was equally fruitless, and she was forced to return disappointed and melancholy, to the room adjoining the hateful chamber that had been appropriated to her; where on opening the folding doors opposite to those that led to the apartments of the Baron, she found herself in a sort of anti-chamber leading to a spacious apartment, where a number of elegant females, voluptuously dressed, were seated; several
of

of whom courteously arose to welcome her; they had finished their repast, but immediately spread a table for Matilda, with a number of the most delicate viands, whilst a sideboard was near her covered with exquisite liquors. Matilda, suspicious of harm, eat very sparingly and cautiously; but positively refused, notwithstanding the raillery of her companions, to taste any liquid, except water. Having finished her repast, the females who were seated around her, endeavoured to amuse and entertain her, by their vivacity and wit; but their conversation conveyed only disgust to the mind of Matilda; and exhausted by grief, she soon retired to her apartment, and locking the door, sat musing upon her misfortunes until the shades of evening threw a gloom around her, when she retired to rest; but during several hours
sleep

sleep fled from her eyes, and corroding anxiety banished all repose, until towards morning exhausted nature sunk under the pressure of grief and fatigue, and a profound sleep in some measure renovated her strength.

In the morning, Arthur and Conrad met in the library pursuant to their appointment of the preceding day, and endeavoured to form some plan, likely on its being carried into effect, to afford them success in their object of releasing Matilda from the captivity in which she was with great probability supposed to be plunged. The East Tower, where doubtless she was placed along with a number of other females destined for the pleasures of the Baron, was completely cut off from all communication with the remaining part of the castle, except by means of the folding doors, that
led

led into the Baron's apartments, and from thence to the common staircase, and of which he always kept the key.— There was also another door leading to the dungeons below, of which the key was likewise anxiously kept by the Baron. The extent of these dungeons, and the passages leading to the different subterraneous apartments were not known to either. Nor were they acquainted with any communication whatever with this formidable tower, but through the apartments of the Baron, in which he constantly resided, or through unexplored dungeons and subterranean caverns. In this dilemma it was extremely difficult to fix upon any plan, by the execution of which, they could avoid imminent danger and ensure a chance of success. So pregnant indeed with dangers and insuperable difficulties was every scheme they formed, that at length they agreed

as a preliminary step, to explore the dungeons beneath, for the purpose of discovering, if possible, a passage to the door which led into them from the bottom of the East tower. For Arthur had some recollection of the place, having been repeatedly in it when a child, whilst it was fitting up in the manner it now appeared, and knew of the door which led to the subterranean apartments; though with the extent of those dungeons and the manner of their communication with each other, he was unacquainted. But if they could arrive at this door at a time when the females, who resided in the tower, were at dinner, there would then be leisure to examine it, without the risk of being discovered, and it might be ascertained whether any possibility existed of rescuing Matilda.

Matilda did not awake until she was
summoned

summoned to breakfast, and then arising, reluctantly quitted her chamber, to partake of some of that food necessary to her existence, and which she could not obtain in the apartment where she would otherwise have gladly remained. After silently finishing her repast she withdrew from her companions, for the purpose of again retiring to indulge her melancholy and her grief alone and unobserved.— Upon entering the apartment which served as a chamber of communication between the room she had just quitted, and the voluptuously furnished apartment of the Baron, a shadow upon the floor struck her eyes; she looked up and the Baron de Umfreville himself stood before her. Matilda involuntarily screamed, and turned to regain the apartment she had quitted. But the Baron immediately seizing her hand, said, “ my
“ lovely

“ lovely Matilda, I bring you a letter
“ from your brother;” presenting one
to her at the same instant, which she
seized with an eager and palpitating
anxiety, that was supposed by the Baron
to originate in her anxious desire to learn
information concerning her parents; but
which, had he been penetrated with the
least suspicion of her attachment to Con-
rad, the lover instead of the brother,
would have been a sufficient proof of her
love. Almost immediately after giving
the letter, and without speaking again, he
retired to his own apartments. Matilda
was not slow in repairing to her cham-
ber, where a thousand mingled emotions
agitated her mind at the moment of
unclosing the billet; of which joy at the
adroitness of Conrad, in thus making the
Baron himself subservient to their love,
was not the least forcible. But what

I

was

was her disappointment when she read the following lines.

DEAR SISTER,

It is the desire of your parents and myself, that you will make yourself perfectly happy in your new residence. It has been long designed for you, and it is with the consent and approbation of your relatives that you are placed there. We are all in good health, and with fervent wishes for your welfare and happiness.

I remain,

Dear Sister,

Your affectionate Brother,

CONRAD.

The Baron, it was evident, had committed a forgery, which unintentionally he had rendered too palpable and evident to cause a moment's deception.—

Without

Without the least suspicion of Conrad's being the lover of Matilda, he had made him write to her as a brother, and thus completely discovered his own depravity. The high hopes Matilda had formed when she received the letter from the Baron, were now dashed to the ground, and the disappointment was the more acutely felt in proportion to the greatness of the expectation. The forgery which the Baron had committed for the evident purpose of insidiously undermining her firmness, plunged her still deeper into despair; no hope remained of escaping from the prison in which she was immured; and perhaps a few fleeting days might see her forcibly hurled from the high pinnacle of virtue, into the abyss of vice. The agitation of her mind almost overpowered her judgment, and she was scarcely conscious of any thing

around her, when she was summoned to dinner. Returning still more disgusted at the conversation of her female companions, all the despair of her mind became renewed with redoubled force, and she was almost tempted to rid herself of the misery in which she was to all appearance hopelessly enveloped, by putting a period to her existence; the thought increased her horror, she paced the room in indescribable agony, and with the most innocent simplicity offered up a prayer for safety and peace. The perturbation of her mind gradually decreased and yielded to sensations of a more placid nature. She went to the window, and through the bars of her prison, obtained a faint glimpse of the beautiful prospect which extended itself in view; the sight contributed to infuse a greater portion of calmness into her agitated soul, and she remained

remained contemplating the beauties of nature until the sun had sunk below the horizon, the mixed darkness of twilight was at an end, and the stars twinkled in the surrounding ether. Something which seemed to move before her eyes made her start, but soon recovering herself, she concluded it was a deception of sight; again it moved, and more attentively looking, she discovered it to be a slight pole or rod that was introduced at the outward opening, and slowly protruded towards the window where she stood. Amazed at such an occurrence, she remained for some time in suspense, and still supposed it to be only a fancied shade; but repeatedly examining the appearance, she was at length convinced of its reality, and on its nearer approach towards her window, there seemed to be something stuck on the end of the wand.

Concluding from the mysterious nature of the circumstance, that it was intended for her, she opened the window, took hold of the rod, which was then just within her reach, and snatched off what was appended to its end, which she found to be a piece of paper curiously rolled up. This she opened with a considerable degree of agitation, but the darkness of her chamber would not permit her to distinguish its contents; and having taken no precaution to ensure a light, she was reluctantly compelled to delay till the morning, the gratification of that curiosity which now created in her mind the utmost anxiety. With assiduous care she placed the paper under her pillow, and hardly capable of sleep from the perturbations of her mind, in the disturbed slumbers which sometimes closed her eyes,

eyes, the incident of the preceding evening had made such an impression on her imagination, as invariably to occur.

The morning dawn at length enlivened her apartment, and the brilliancy of the rising sun having cast into a temporary obscurity the gentle light of innumerable stars, Matilda awoke from an unrefreshing sleep; and rejoicing at the sunshine which enlivened her chamber, took the paper from beneath her pillow, and read as follows:

“ Descend the staircase to morrow
“ when your fellow prisoners are at dinner, and unbolt the door, when it will
“ immediately be opened, and you will
“ find yourself in the arms of him, whose
“ existence depends upon rescuing you
“ from your imprisonment. To obviate
“ suspicion at your absence from dinner,
“ pretend indisposition; and to prevent
I 4 “ your

“ your escape from being soon discovered, lock the door of your apartment when you quit it, and bring with you the key.”

The note at first excited a number of anxious doubts in the mind of Matilda; she feared it was a snare to betray her, and another contrivance of the Baron's for some fell purpose only known to himself; but the manner of its introduction, the instructions contained in it for her conduct, and above all the words, “ the arms of him whose existence depends upon releasing you from imprisonment,” forcibly struck her, and carried conviction to her mind that Conrad alone was the author, and the man into whose arms she was to be received. She now gave a loose to joy at the near prospect of her delivery from imprisonment and brutality. Hope, seducing

ducing hope enlivened her mind, and she became nearly as cheerful as when wandering with her beloved Conrad in the boundless track of imagination, or through the pleasant fields that surrounded the Castle of Umfreville. In this joyful mood she proceeded to the breakfast table, where her companions observing the alteration in her manner, endeavoured to add to her hilarity. But their manners and conversation constantly excited in the mind of Matilda, alternate emotions of pity and disgust, and all their exertions rather tended to fortify than eradicate the impressions she had received. Matilda in the height of her cheerfulness, had nearly forgotten the instructions contained in the note she had received the preceding night; but now pretended to be seized with a sudden indisposition, and retiring to her chamber

waited with the most anxious solicitude and eager impatiencē for the hour of dinner, when instead of partaking of a repast rendered disagreeable by the company with whom she was compelled to associate, she might fly to the arms of him who was the Lord of her bosom, and the constant theme of her reflections.

Conrad and Arthur, in pursuance of the resolution they had formed, determined immediately to explore the dungeon's depth, and the latter having provided himself with a number of keys of different descriptions, which amongst other works of mechanism he possessed, and likewise with a small lantern, which might be easily concealed, with the utmost secrecy they repaired to the other side of the moat, pursuant to the advice
of

of Arthur, which having crossed in a small boat the latter had provided, without the knowledge of any one except himself and Conrad, and entering by a private door which was easily unlocked, they proceeded to that leading to the dungeons, which was likewise with little difficulty opened, Arthur having previously deceived his father into a belief that he was going upon an expedition for the purpose of endeavouring to discover some designs which he suspected had been formed by the Baron de Montacute against the territories of Umfreville, and should take Conrad with him, whom he thought might be useful. They descended together, until they arrived at another massy door, which having with some difficulty opened, they found themselves in a sort of passage, on each side of which were a number of doors; and they remained for some time in sus-

pence, undetermined which of those on the eastern side they should attempt to open. At length unable to make a choice from the appearance of any reasons in favour of either, they attacked the first that presented itself, and having turned it upon its hinges, advanced into a narrow dungeon, where light and air were admitted by one small aperture.— Here they found several chains, and divers instruments of torture, the sight of which made them shudder and recoil with horror. They inspected the walls very closely, but no door could be discovered, nor any other opening, except the entrance and that which admitted a faint glimmering of light. Thus disappointed, they returned again to the passage, and having carefully shut the door, proceeded to the next, which having in the same manner opened, they perceived themselves to be

be in another dungeon, nearly similar to the last, but much darker, and in which they were equally disappointed. In this manner they explored nine dungeons, having a great similarity to each other, and in which they met with the same ill fortune.

Tired and fatigued with such a fruitless search, they were almost tempted to quit it in despair; one door only remained, and Conrad still hoping for success, urged his companion to make another effort, as that must inevitably either lead them on towards their object, or certainly convince them of the impossibility of proceeding any farther. Arthur suffered himself to be persuaded, and they recommenced their exertions. The door they were now essaying, notwithstanding it was unlocked by one of the keys which Arthur brought with him, resisted their efforts

efforts to open it, for a considerable time, a number of years having elapsed since it grated upon its hinges, it required great exertions of strength to push it back : at length having succeeded; they saw before them what they at first supposed to be another dungeon, but no instrument of torture or confinement was visible within its walls, and they now began to hope it was a passage leading to another part of the subterraneous regions, that they wished to explore. This expectation, to their no small joy, met with a confirmation on their arrival at the end of, what was in reality a passage, and they found there a door equal to that at the other end in size and strength. Animated at the discovery, they used greater exertions, and opened it with less difficulty, and were now in another passage, similar to that they had first entered, on the
the

the east of which was a number of doors equal to that contained on each side of the former. They now concluded, and with a great degree of probability in their favour, that the passage they had just quitted was continued in a strait line, and impressed with this supposition eagerly attacked the door immediately opposite; but upon making an entry, their hopes were damped, all the apparatus of a dungeon of confinement, filled up the prospect before them; and the same disappointment occurred, which had persecuted them in those they had before examined. The next must doubtless be that which would gratify their expectation; but here it was again crossed, and dungeon after dungeon was explored, until they had arrived at the farther end of the passage.

Despair began once more to throw its
gloom

gloom over their minds, when on opening the last door, they again saw the appearance of a passage. Though now much fatigued, a prospect of realizing their hopes, added new vigour to their efforts, and having forced the door, they found themselves once more in a passage, and eagerly looked for the door on the other side, but none was to be perceived. Surprised and disappointed, they inspected the opposite wall again and again. From their situation they were convinced it was not the boundary of the dungeons, but as nearly as they could guess, the commencement of the East Tower; but notwithstanding, however, the minutest inspection, they could not discover any trace of a door, and were about to quit the scene of their fatiguing exertions, pensive and sorrowful, when the foot of Conrad happening to slip, he
fell

fell against the wall. The shock caused a brick to fall out upon the ground: the incident excited their curiosity, and looking at the place from whence it had proceeded, they discovered several bricks above and below it to be loose. Having removed these, they discovered part of a door with its lock; Arthur endeavoured to open the lock with several of the keys he had brought with him, but could not effect his purpose. Key after key was tried, but in vain; at length one was found which succeeded, and they pushed against the door for some time, without being able to move it; until making a desperate effort, it burst open with considerable violence, and they fell headlong within the passage it led to.

Recovering themselves from their fall, they proceeded: after opening another door into a passage, on the side of which
from

from whence they had entered were several doors leading to dungeons similar to those they had explored. On the other side they perceived a strong massy door which they had no doubt led to the upper rooms of the East Tower, this they opened with some difficulty, and, inspecting the other side, were surprized it had been obedient to their efforts, as two strong bolts appeared to have guarded it against all such attempts, but looking farther they discovered the staples, worn by rust, had given way, and fallen from their places, which rendered the bolts insufficient, and of no use. A narrow staircase was now before them, which they cautiously ascended until they arrived at a door, which, according to every appearance, was the means of communication with the upper apartments of the East Tower.

They

They several times looked through the keyhole, but the passage before it was dark, and nothing could be seen. They listened for some time, but could not hear either the footsteps, or voice, of any one. A murmuring noise was soon after heard, and, listening very attentively, they at length distinguished female voices above. There was now every probability that the inhabitants of the tower were all together in their common apartment, either at dinner, or conversing afterwards. It was evident, from the number of steps they had ascended, that this was the door leading from the East Tower to the dungeons below, and Arthur began to try the lock; after numerous trials he at length found a key which unlocked it. This he immediately gave to Conrad, that it might not be mixed with the others which he had

had about him. The joy of the latter almost overpowered his senses; the prospect which he now had of releasing his beloved Matilda from the dreadful prison that immured her angelic form, and rescuing her from the unhallowed violation of her tyrannic gaoler, created a ferment in his mind, and caused a tremor upon his nerves, that took from him his presence of mind, and he swore he would instantly proceed to her chamber, and deliver her from the dangers with which she was environed.

Arthur, more cool, moderated the transports of his companion, which seemed almost to overleap the bounds of fraternal affection, and having considered, for a moment, he observed to him it would be imprudent to attempt to force open the door, which he had been successful in unlocking, as the noise, being
fo

so near the chambers above, would most probably alarm their inhabitants, and the consequence would be, a discovery pregnant with danger to themselves, and equally involving the object of their deliverance. Impressed with this conviction Arthur persuaded his companion to accompany him to the passage below, where, without danger of being overheard, they might consider of a plan likely to afford them success. To this proposal Conrad at length agreed, and having carefully relocked the door, they retired.

Arthur, from the faint recollection he had of the internal part of the East Tower, thought he remembered that bolts were put upon the door, to ensure a greater degree of security; for though they were no security against the females who inhabited the place, they must effectually

tually prevent any attempt to make an entry from the other side. And a combination between any of those females, and persons without, who were capable of assisting their escape, was hardly within the verge of possibility.

They were now masters of all the passages through the dungeons, and the lock of the door that led to the apartments in the East Tower, but to push back the bolts, that guarded it on the other side, must be the work of some person within. And at any rate it was obviously impossible the deliverance of Matilda could be effected, unless she was made acquainted with the exertions making for her rescue, and instructed how to assist those efforts, and render her escape complete.

The conveyance of this information to Matilda still remained a most difficult task.

task. But it was evident they could proceed no further where they were in the attainment of their object. It was, therefore, resolved to measure back their steps, and meet again on a rising ground, at some distance from the castle, where the East Tower was in full view, and some thought might occur, likely to be of service in the execution of their plan.

They immediately returned, leaving unlocked all the doors in their way, until they arrived at that which led to the upper part of the castle ; this they had carefully locked before they descended the stairs, and forgotten the key that opened it ; both began to be alarmed, and, with a considerable degree of trepidation, several keys were tried, but without success. Their terror increased, and scarcely could the trembling hand of Arthur guide each
into

into the keyhole, but at length that which had opened it was found, and they arrived in the dark passage, where Arthur, having again locked the door delivered it to Conrad, that it might not, by any chance, become mixed with others, and they thus be prevented from pursuing their scheme.

They now proceeded through the private passage to the moat, which having ferried over, they entered the castle, as if just returned from their expedition, and whilst Conrad repaired to the buttery to obtain some refreshment, Arthur ascended to his father's apartment, and entered into a long detail of the suspicions he entertained relative to the conduct of the Baron de Montacute; adding, that it was necessary to watch his motions with considerable care, but he had no doubt, with the assistance of Conrad,

rad, of being enabled to disconcert all his projects. The Baron was delighted with the active zeal of his son, and invested him with all the necessary powers to pursue his plans, triumphing in the thought of leaving every care to Arthur, and having nothing to disturb his revelry in those sensual pleasures which were his only delight.

Conrad, after partaking of some refreshment, waited impatiently for the evening, and, impatience rising into extreme agitation, at length determined him to repair to the place, where Arthur had appointed to meet him, long before the time agreed upon. Having arrived at the spot, he took his station behind some bushes which concealed him from observation, but from whence he had a full view of the East Tower, where his beloved Matilda remained a forlorn prisoner. Long

K

and

and anxiously he contemplated the place; all the happy moments he had enjoyed in her company; all the tender sensations he had experienced from the influence of her amiable qualities; every word, and every look, that had escaped the lovely maid, and unintentionally displayed her love, now unbidden, recalled themselves to his memory, and suffused his eyes with tears. The light of the sun was thrown full upon the Tower, and its dazzling glare prevented him from distinguishing any object at the windows. After a short time had elapsed, by the further decline of the sun, the dazzle of its rays was removed, and, a clear and strong mass of light being thrown upon the Tower, he thought he discovered a female at one of the windows; looking again, with the most anxious solicitude, he was convinced

vinced he had not been deceived. The body of light, which, from the clearness of the evening illumined the place, enabled him, notwithstanding the windows were so far removed within, to distinguish the features. It was Matilda herself; scarcely knowing what he did he was about to rush forward, though without any object to be attained by his exertions. But reflection coming to his aid, he determined to remain, and, whilst he marked well the window from whence a glimpse of his beloved Matilda had caught his anxious view, a thought darted into his mind that promised him all the advantages of success, without being beholden to Arthur de Umfreville, whom, though he believed his designs were honourable, he could not but consider as a rival, and a rival, who from his power and fortune, added to his share in the gratitude of

Matilda for her deliverance, would possess claims, the contemplation of which made Conrad tremble, and sicken at the fear of being successfully supplanted in her affections by the potent Arthur.

Conrad had in his possession the keys of the private door, that leading to the dungeons, and up to the East Tower, which were all now necessary to pass through the subterranean passages, and proceed immediately to the East Tower, and if he could convey to Matilda the necessary information and instruction, whilst he temporized with Arthur, and persuaded him to another interview for the formation of a plan, he might alone conduct her escape, and, flying swiftly, be enabled to reach some obscure place of security, where they might remain till the ardour of pursuit was cooled, in consequence of repeated unsuccessful efforts,

when

when it was highly probable they would completely effect their escape from the tyranny and anger of the Baron.

These ideas dwelt upon his mind, and absorbed his reflections, until roused from their contemplation by the arrival of Arthur de Umfreville. The sun had now nearly finished its daily course, and the strong clear mass of light that had been thrown upon the windows of the East Tower, was considerably faded, so that the form of Matilda was no longer visible even to the sharpened sight of Conrad. No wonder, therefore, that Arthur could not, after watching for a considerable time, distinguish any object to which the name of Matilda might be applied, and, thus disappointed, began to despair of being enabled to have any communication with her.

Conrad consoled him for the want of

success, and observed it was highly probable, by coming a little earlier to the spot on the next evening, when the light was stronger, they might obtain a glimpse of Matilda, and discover the chamber in which she was confined. Arthur acquiesced in the justice of the observation, but lamented the delay, and proposed various schemes for her deliverance, which were all demonstrated by Conrad to be futile and insufficient, unless they could communicate with the object their exertions were directed to deliver. The former was convinced of the absolute necessity there was for making choice of some means to instruct her in what manner she must promote her escape, to entitle them to any hope of success, and at length agreed to meet Conrad on the same spot at an early hour on the morrow evening. The latter,

latter, for the purpose of properly directing his own efforts, endeavoured to learn of Arthur the best plan of escape in the event of their imparting the design to Matilda, who informed him they must convey her from the East Tower at the hour of dinner, and, remaining in the subterraneous apartments until night, escape through the private door, having taken the precaution to carry with them a suit of male habiliments in which she must issue from the castle. Conrad enquired why they could not convey her by night from the prison, and effect their escape immediately; to which Arthur replied, that several of the females, inhabiting the place, slept on the lower floor, and the noise caused by opening the door would assuredly alarm them, and be the means of discovering the plot. The former had now learnt all he wished to be informed

of, and the stars having began to display their light they left their station, and had no sooner arrived at the castle, and Arthur ascended to his apartments, than Conrad began to work upon his plan. Having procured several slender twigs he tied them together until he made a pole, long enough for his purpose, and fixed on at the end a pointed iron; he wrote the note, which Matilda afterwards received, and conveyed it in at the external opening, hoping that she might still be at the window, or if not, might perceive its shade, or hear the noise of it against the glass, and thus be induced to open it, and take off the paper. When he found, from the motion of the pole, that some one had seized it, he waited till it ceased, and then immediately drawing it down, fearful of being discovered, with the most joyful emotions perceived

perceived the note was gone. No obstacle now remained to the execution of the scheme he had formed, and hurrying back to the Castle; after partaking of a slight refreshment, betook himself to bed, but not to sleep; the important enterprise he had to execute on the morrow—for important it truly was to his happiness—filled and agitated his mind, and prevented it from acquiring sufficient calmness to resign itself into the arms of Morpheus; now and then, a slumber would steal upon his senses, and the dungeons he had explored in the day were continually present to his mind.

At length, sinking exhausted into a sleep, which lasted beyond the usual time of quitting his chamber, he was awakened by a murmuring noise in the Castle; which, upon listening attentively, seemed to result from a number of voices very

K 5

earnestly

earnestly conversing : wondering what had interested their attention, he listened for a while, and plainly distinguished the name of Matilda frequently repeated. He now hastened to dress himself, and leave his apartment, for the purpose of learning the cause of the agitation, but hesitated a moment at the door, reflecting that his darling scheme of delivering Matilda might have been discovered, and he only quit his chamber to be immured in a dungeon ; recollecting however, his danger would in that case be the same whether he remained or departed, he opened his door and proceeded to the place from whence the noise seemed to originate, and where he found nearly all the retainers belonging to the household collected together about the body of a young woman which had been found that day, and dragged out of the moat before the Castle.

No

No female had been missing from thence except Matilda, and an unanimous conclusion was drawn, that it must be her. The features were so much disfigured that they could not be recognized, and this made them the more positive in their suppositions. Even Colin and Annette, weeping at the sight, were convinced it was the corpse of their daughter; and Jaques himself began to curse his ill fortune at so unlucky an event, as he now imagined she was really dead, and that he had wronged the Baron in attributing to his arts her sudden disappearance.

It was at this moment that Conrad arrived, and they all waited with eager expectation for his opinion upon the subject. He looked for some time upon the body before him—it was the size of Matilda, but the features could not be distinguished, and he remained a considerable time

in anguish and surprise ; but a number of circumstances were revolved in his mind, and it scarcely appeared within the verge of possibility that it could be the corpse of Matilda. He was convinced he had seen her on the preceding day, and it must doubtless be her who received his note ; but the body he now viewed appeared to have been in the water several days ; added to this, her dress was different from that in which it was attired. These reasons determined his conviction, but thinking supposition of her decease in the minds of those present might tend to annihilate all suspicion of the scheme which he was about to execute for the purpose of delivering her ; and, at the same time, whilst he had the means of that deliverance in his own power, if he could convince Arthur de Umfreville of her death, it would prevent him from taking any
steps

steps to assist her escape, and extinguish in his mind the last embers of that passion which seemed to agitate his breast. Thus Conrad would have the sole merit of rescuing his beloved Matilda, and his claims upon her love would not be weakened by the interference of any powerful interloper. This additional scheme, which was rather the result of cunning than of true wisdom and magnanimity, and beneath the superior powers of his mind, he immediately proceeded to carry into execution; and it was favoured by the appearance of Arthur, who, hearing a considerable bustle in the house, descended the staircase to enquire into the cause of the noise.

Conrad, assuming an air of deep distress, thus laconically addressed him: "Behold, my Lord, the sad remains of my unfortunate sister!" Arthur, starting at his expression, instantly approached the body,
and

and remained for a considerable time in a suspense similar to that which had absorbed the mind of Conrad when first contemplating the same subject. Various circumstances were hostile to the supposition of its being the body of Matilda which had been found;—this was only the second day since her disappearance, whilst the corpse he was viewing seemed to have been bereft of life a much longer time. With her dress, on the day she disappeared, he was unacquainted; this Conrad perfectly recollected, and the difference of apparel convinced him it could not be the same. The circumstance escaped the consideration of Colin and Annette, and Arthur, being ignorant of it, could not positively determine, though the probabilities were against the supposition of its being the pallid remains of Matilda. But though he remained in doubt and suspense,

it

it appeared to his mind advantageous to his scheme, that the household of his father and the parents of Matilda should imagine her dead. He knew his only object was to wrest her from his father's grasp that he might despoil her honour, and become that merciless and depraved violator of her virtue and her peace, which he was only angry with the Baron for being to the exclusion of himself. If she was supposed to be dead by her relatives and the household, no farther enquiry would be instituted concerning her disappearance ; nor would any suspicion remain relative to the place of her imprisonment, or rest upon any one respecting whatever attempts might be made to rescue her from her present confinement. Conrad too seemed to believe it to be the corpse of his sister, and why could he not carry on his scheme without the assistance of Conrad ?

Conrad? The thought struck him, and took possession of his mind. The high notions of honour which seemed to stimulate the mind of Conrad, might very probably be an obstacle to his views relative to Matilda, whilst Arthur seemed to himself fully competent to carry on his scheme to a conclusion, without the assistance of the former. He even began to wonder why he had at first called in his aid. These reflections employed the mind of Arthur, during the time he appeared to contemplate the corpse of Matilda, and determined him to acquiesce publicly in the general opinion; whilst, privately, he pursued his plan for her rescue, as, from every circumstance, he still thought her immured in the East Tower; and he even doubted whether it was not a scheme of his father, for the purpose of stifling all enquiry relative to the lovely maid, whom he wished to appropriate to himself.

Conrad

Conrad perceiving the voice of Arthur concur in the general opinion, secretly exulted in all the triumph of success; whilst Arthur, rejoicing with equal animation, immediately ascended to his father, and determining to deceive him into a belief that himself, as well as the Baron's household, and the parents and brother of Matilda, were convinced of the reality of Matilda's death, since no suspicion would then be generated in his mind of any attempt likely to be made for her rescue, informed his father that the corpse of Matilda had been found, and her disappearance was now accounted for, though in a melancholy manner.

The Baron, who in reality knew nothing of the matter, at first thought it was actually the body of Matilda that had been discovered, and in the hurry of his mind was about proceeding to the East Tower to institute
an

an enquiry concerning her existence, but recollecting his son was before him, he restrained his impetuosity ; whilst the latter minutely detailed all the circumstances relative to the accidental finding and appearance of the corpse in question, which completely convinced the Baron it was not Matilda. Becoming the dupe of his son's artifice, he rejoiced in his turn at an incident unexpectedly happening, so peculiarly calculated to annihilate all suspicion concerning her confinement, and further the purpose of his designs. —The advantage to his scheme, of a belief on the part of the parents and brother of Matilda, of his son and his household, in her death, was obvious and apparent. No obstacle would then remain to the completion of his purpose, and the unfortunate damsel must be completely cut off from all communication with society, and bereft of all external assistance.

sistance. Perceiving the subject in this point of view, he calmly listened to his son's narrative; and when he had concluded, in order to strengthen that belief in the event of her decease, which seemed to remain in uncontrouled possession of the latter's mind, he said, that two days before, he had heard, early in the morning, a noise in the moat, as if occasioned by the falling in of some heavy body, but not particularly striking his mind, the incident had not again occurred until Arthur's narrative brought it strongly to his recollection.

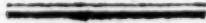
His father's calmness and concluding observation rather staggered the mind of Arthur; but, well acquainted with his character, and observing the agitation which the first mention of Matilda's corpse had caused in his mind, and which, in spite of his dissimulation, appeared in his countenance,

tenance, he still considered his supposition of her imprisonment in the East Tower to be warranted by a very large portion of probability ; and, leaving the presence of the Baron, determined to pursue the plan he had formed with unabated ardor.

The Baron, well versed in all the refinements of dissimulation, immediately sent for Colin, and condoling with him in terms of the most tender sympathy upon the loss of his daughter, again assured him of a comfortable support for the remainder of his life, and immediately issued his command for a pompous funeral to be provided at his own expence ; observing to the disconsolate father, that her goodness and amiable qualities deserved every mark of respect and attention it was possible to bestow upon her cold and inanimate remains.

The afflicted Colin was in some degree

gree cheered by the apparently generous and humane conduct of the Baron, and retired to administer all the consolation in his power to the forrowing Annette, who was now paying the last duties to the supposed remains of her unfortunate and beloved child.



C H A P. VII.

THIS incident had employed a considerable portion of time, and little now remained before the hour of dinner; for which the anxious Conrad waited with more impatience than the most determined glutton or sensual epicure. At length the auspicious moment arrived, and having concealed a small lanthorn in his pocket, and informed Colin he was going a short distance into the country, with palpitating heart repaired to the dark passage without being perceived; finding means to carry with him some provisions, and likewise a complete

complete disguise for Matilda; opening the outer door leading to the dungeon, which he carefully relocked, he proceeded with rapid step and without farther fear through the passages which had been purposely left open, until he arrived at the door that separated him from his Matilda. Trembling in every limb and with quick and difficult respiration, he listened for a while and heard the same murmuring noise from above which had struck his ear the preceding day, and convinced him they were at dinner.— The sound of a footstep caught his ear, and more violently agitated, he listened with anxious attention; it proceeded towards the door, and, enrapturing sound, he heard the massy bolts recoil from their staples. In a fever of joy he turned the key, the lock reluctantly gave way, the door

door opened, and he caught her in his arms:

He had sufficient presence of mind left to relock the door, and put the key into his pocket, and then silently led his fair companion down the stairs, across the passage beneath, and along the short one on the opposite side, until they arrived in that, on the East side of which Conrad had accidentally discovered the concealed door. This door being in the middle of the wall, and the passage of communication with the Western dungeons at one end, Conrad concluded it would be the best plan to lead Matilda to the other extremity of the passage they were now in, as that place in the event of any one's entering the dungeons, which was extremely improbable, would be entirely out of their track, and by concealing the feeble light he had
with

with him, they might remain there in perfect darkness until night, as the narrow chink which admitted light and air at the opposite end of the passage, cast along it too feeble a glimmer to enable any one to distinguish an object at so great a distance; and when night had diffused her stillness over the castle, and the senses of its inhabitants were no longer open to the impression of external objects, they might then by means of the private door, and the little vessel upon the moat depart from the castle, and before the escape of Matilda was known, might have reached some place of safety and concealment.

Fraught with these opinions, he led his trembling companion to the extremity of the passage where he had determined to take up his abode for a few hours, and luckily discovered a recess with a seat, where

L

they

they must be completely hid, unless any one came purposely to look for them, and now concealing the light, he at length broke the silence he had hitherto strictly observed, that accorded so well with the gloom of the subterraneous regions in which they were now seated, and in a whispering tone said, "Here, my dear
" Matilda, we will remain until night,
" when we shall be enabled, with a good
" prospect of success, to effect our escape from this mansion of depravity
" and vice." His fair companion in the same whispering tone, acquiesced in his resolution, and they sat down in the recess that so effectually concealed them.

Conrad was now relieved from his agitation, and a portion of that anxiety which had corroded his mind, and reviving in pleasing remembrance former

mer scenes of tenderness and love, he anticipated with all the eagerness of a vivid imagination the delights of future happiness. But scarcely had he begun to be thus employed when they heard a distant noise; Conrad alarmed, and fearful of being discovered, listened with the most eager anxiety, until he plainly heard a footstep advancing along one of the passages that led to that at the end of which they were seated. Fright almost deprived him of reflection, and the power of motion, his companion trembled violently, whilst Conrad recollecting the danger of her screaming, and thereby betraying the place of their concealment, placed his hand upon her mouth, and strictly charged her to avoid making the least noise. The footsteps now evidently advanced, and her agitation becoming extreme, and too powerful for her senses, she fainted in his arms: still

more distressed by so unfortunate a circumstance, he had no resource but to remain where he was, and by the most scrupulous silence, endeavour to prevent a discovery.

He heard the footsteps, which seemed to be those of a single person, cautiously advancing along the passage, in the recesses of which they were seated, and could with difficulty moderate the extreme agitation of his nerves. No glimmer of any light appeared, and he ventured to peep from his concealment, but nothing could be seen, though he distinctly heard the footsteps, which at length took a direction on the opposite side of the passage; Conrad still heard them proceed until the sound died upon his ear, when the shutting of a door again awakened his fright, and renewed his perturbation, he once more heard them, though now
seeming

seeming to be those of two persons returning very slowly into the passage at the extremity of which they had placed themselves. His tremor increased to an almost ungovernable height, when he was relieved by their taking a contrary direction from the angle where he remained : he heard them pass through the short passage at the end, and again the sound became inaudible ; but soon afterwards a door grated upon its hinges, and he distinctly heard some one in the dungeon, to the wall of which the stone he was sitting upon closely adjoined ; chains rattled for a moment, a whispering succeeded, which lasted a few moments, and all was once more silent as the grave.

Fright and agitation now yielded in the mind of Conrad to wonder and amazement ; for he could not rationally explain

the cause of the strange sounds which had met his ear. Report had adjudged the place to be haunted, but the strong intellects of Conrad despised the tale. Yet how could the noise that had just now filled him with terror and affright proceed from any living being? The way through the dungeons to the East Tower was only known to himself and Arthur de Umfreville. That Arthur should walk there at that time was, in the highest degree, improbable,—that he should be there without a light, was incredible. But the clanking of the chains and whispering, was conclusive evidence against such a supposition. It must be a supernatural being—it must be an apparition that haunted the dungeons! And the latter conclusion appeared so extremely just, reasoning from the evidence of what he had heard, that, incredulous as he was, he found himself compelled to assent to its truth.

His

His mind had been so wholly absorbed by the incidents the occurrence of which had created so much alarm, that he had forgotten the state in which his fair companion still remained, reclining upon his bosom. Gently raising her head, and placing his hand upon her mouth to prevent any unguarded exclamation, he enjoyed the inexpressible satisfaction of witnessing her recovery. When, softly whispering in her ear to be silent, they sat for some time without interchanging a word. Terrified as he had been by the noise, and though half convinced it must have arisen from a supernatural being; yet hearing the whispering in the adjoining dungeon, and not certainly knowing whether any one was there, he was afraid to speak; and waited with the greatest anxiety for the time, which was still far distant, when he might safely quit a situation now become extremely irksome and unpleasant.

A considerable bustle above, added to the clangor of arms, now attracted their notice, and excited some fear. After a short interval, a noise was again heard below; and Conrad listening with the most anxious attention, plainly heard some one advancing towards the passage; and to increase his alarm, the footsteps proceeded along the passage leading from the East Tower. The fear of being discovered now more forcibly impressed itself upon his mind, and the agitation of his fair companion was renewed with redoubled force; with difficulty Conrad prevented her from screaming aloud, and on the nearer approach of the footsteps she again became senseless in his arms. The noise ceased for a minute, when it approached nearer; and the dazzling glare of a strong light illuminated the passage. The footsteps seemed to be those of two
or

or three persons, and the terror of Conrad became extreme. It was doubtless the Baron, who, being made acquainted with the escape of Matilda, was come to seek her in these dark caverns; where, from the situation of the door, he would suppose her to be fled. They advanced along the passage, towards the place where he and his fair companion were seated. Horror in the thought! He unsheathed his dagger, and resolutely determined, if their concealment was discovered, instantly to plunge it into the heart of his companion, and then transfix his own. The footsteps approached nearer, and the fatal dagger was already brandished by the trembling hand of Conrad, when a pause ensued, and they slowly retreated towards the opposite extremity of the passage. A rattling of chains was now heard in the adjoining dungeon. Whilst the light in

a great measure vanished, they proceeded along the little passage at the end, and shortly afterwards a door was heard to unlock: an interval again ensued, and another grated upon its hinges; several were afterwards opened in the same manner; until at length the party entered the dungeon adjoining to the place where he sat, when a piercing shriek resounded through the vaulted caverns; and soon after the footsteps were plainly heard, advancing with extreme slowness in the passage where Conrad sat, but no light was to be seen; still appearing to return by the way they had arrived, the sound became no longer heard, and a death-like silence succeeded. Astonishment was now at its utmost height in the mind of Conrad, who, still remaining safe with his beloved Matilda, was convinced it was not any pursuit of her that had caused the
strange

strange noises he had heard. That the Baron, or any of the residents in the East Tower, should descend into these subterraneous apartments without any specific object in view, was extremely improbable; and he well knew that all the dungeons on the west-side of where he sat, which appeared to have been explored by the last party, were uninhabited. Unable to account for these mysterious circumstances, he seemed compelled to have recourse to supernatural means, and at length concluded they arose from apparitions who frequented the dungeons. A conclusion, which, however strange, appeared to be the only resource left to account for the combination of strange events that had just occurred.

His fair companion, now a little recovered, complained of much indisposition. There being at length a cessation of noise,

L 6

they

they partook of the provisions he had brought with him as comfortably as the darkness of the place would permit, for he was afraid to display his light, and she in some measure regained her spirits. All was now silent, not the least sound was to be heard; and Conrad had leisure to reflect upon the course to be pursued, after he had led Matilda out of the Castle. The ruinous building, where he had found the portrait so much resembling himself, darted into his mind; it was very probably the place where he should meet with the means of elucidating the mystery he ardently wished to develope, and to that he determined to hasten. But it was at least two days journey from the Castle of Umfreville, and a pursuit would no doubt be commenced in the morning, which they might find a difficulty in escaping from; at the same time he reflected, the Baron would

would be considerably embarrassed, as he could not pursue them without assistance, and all his villainy relative to Matilda must then be discovered. In the male habiliments he had brought with him, her escape could better be effected than in her own dress; and he determined they should travel the greater part of the night, and towards morning, striking off into by-paths, endeavour to obtain concealment in an unfrequented place, or lodging and refreshment in some cottage, where they might pass for pilgrims.

Afraid for some time of uttering a word, he at length whispered his plan, which was highly approved of; and, with the utmost impatience, he waited till the hour when darkness and silence might allow of their escape undiscovered. A clangor of arms was now heard without, which excited some fearful attention, but
this

this soon ceased, and silence again prevailed. At length the long expected night arrived, and Conrad, though the darkness was unpleasant, joyfully observed the extinction of his light when he took his lanthorn from its concealment; whilst his fair companion, having cloathed herself in the apparel he had brought for that purpose, they proceeded through the passages until they arrived at the outer door; which being unlocked by Conrad, and likewise the private door, they found themselves without the Castle, and at the side of the moat: but, alas! the little vessel was not to be seen! Alarmed at the circumstance, the affrighted Conrad, and his still more terrified companion, made the complete circuit of the Castle, but no boat was to be discovered. At length, looking at the draw-bridge, they found it unaccountably not drawn up;
this

this afforded them the best means of escape, and with eager step they passed over to the other side. The night was dark, and inclined to be tempestuous, and after travelling some time with a considerable degree of trepidation, which did not allow them to interchange conversation, the storm howled around them, and Conrad, anxious to shield his beloved Matilda from its "pitiless pelting", anxiously looked around for some place where they might meet with safety and shelter. A small building was perceived at a short distance, which had formerly been used as a sort of watch tower, but was now, from the greater extent of the domains of Umfreville, become in a great measure useless, and was suffered to moulder into ruins. To this they cautiously approached, and finding it uninhabited, gladly entered, where they at least found shelter, which,
from

from the increasing violence of the tempest, had become an event devoutly to be wished.

Groping about for some time they at length found a seat, where they impatiently waited the abatement of the storm. Conrad was now a little more at ease, and in tender language poured forth the sentiments of his soul. His fair companion answered only in whispers, afraid of their being overheard and discovered. It still rained, but the height of the storm was considerably diminished, and they determined to recommence their journey. They travelled with no farther interruption until the day began to dawn, when his companion, being exhausted by fatigue, Conrad determined to lead her to a cottage which stood in view, and request some refreshment. Arrived at the hovel, the inhabitants of which had just arisen

arisen, he informed them that he and his companion were travellers who had lost their way the preceding night, and not being able to meet with any house where they could obtain admision, they had wandered about until now, and being quite fatigued and exhausted, requested the means of satisfying hunger, and rest. The good people of the cottage readily believed the tale; and inviting them to enter, spread out for the use of their visitors what their poverty afforded; but his companion declined the refreshment of food, and pleading extreme debility and fatigue, desired the conveniences of repose. This was immediately acceded to, and she retired to enjoy that sleep which unusual exertion had rendered highly necessary. Conrad, after heartily partaking of what was set before him, politely refused their offer of a bed; and took a nap where he was seated. Soon after he awoke, he was informed by
the

the mistress of the cottage, that his companion, who was above, requested to speak with him alone.

There seemed something mysterious in the demand, and upon ascending to enquire what his beloved Matilda wished to say, a form met his eyes far different from that of Matilda; he started, and could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses; but his sight bore witness of its truth, and soon his ear confirmed the sensation, when he heard the voice of the female before him, who immediately, upon his entering, said to him, with rather an embarrassed air, “ An attempt
“ to deceive you any longer must have
“ been vain, and therefore I thought the
“ most proper line of conduct would be
“ marked by at once sending for you,
“ that you may discover the error without
“ out any risk of our being betrayed by
“ the

“ the presence of others ; it is evident to
“ your sight I am not the person whose
“ escape you intended to effect, nor do
“ I know whom your attempt was meant
“ to rescue, but, anxious myself to fly
“ from a hateful and detested prison,
“ I eagerly seized the opportunity, and,
“ whilst I am sorry for your disappoint-
“ ment, I congratulate myself upon my
“ happy deliverance, for which, with gra-
“ titude, I shall ever consider myself as
“ your debtor.” Marianne, for that was
her name, possessed a graceful person, and
a considerable share of beauty, but tinctured with a voluptuousness which displayed an absence of that chaste refinement attendant upon virtue. She was accomplished in every art that could add poignancy to pleasure, and now darted a look at her deliverer, which, had his mind been disengaged, might, perhaps,
have

have made a considerable inroad in his inclinations. But disappointment and rage had taken entire possession of him; and her charms failed of their effect; she appeared a demon to his eyes, and scarcely could the consideration of her sex prevent him from laying violent hands upon the person who had so cruelly deceived him. But a little reflection coming to his aid, and, unable to account for so mysterious an incident, whilst he eagerly wished to gain information concerning Matilda, he stifled his anger, and said to his companion, "By what means did you acquire
"a knowledge of my plan;" Marianne replied, "I picked up a note in the passage to our dining-room in which it
"was developed, and having long wished
"to escape from the odious confinement
"in which I was immured, I eagerly embraced the opportunity that offered,
"and

“ and determined to share with the fa-
“ voured fair one her joyful deliverance,
“ as, from my knowledge of the scheme,
“ she would not have thought proper to
“ deny my request, whilst the circum-
“ stance might have been concealed from
“ the rest. I pursued the directions con-
“ tained in the note, and, at the appointed
“ time, descended to the door leading to
“ the dungeons; no other female ap-
“ peared, and at the moment of my arri-
“ val the door opened; I was sorry for the
“ deception wherein I was about to play
“ a principal part, but to have hesitated
“ might have been the means of excit-
“ ing alarm, and causing discoveries, in
“ the event of which my life might have
“ been in imminent danger, and, therefore,
“ without delay, I precipitated myself
“ into your arms; the rest you are ac-
“ quainted with; but the terror I expe-
“ rienced in the dungeons was a sufficient
“ punish-

“punishment for my deceit.” Anguish had forcibly seized the mind of Conrad; he raved at the disappointment, and pushed away, with rage and contempt, Marianne, who endeavoured, by her soothing arts, to console him; at length he reflected he was in some measure in her power, and, softening his manner, said, “Excuse the rudeness of my former and disappointment; I wished to deliver a beloved sister from the sensual tyranny of the Baron, and the failure of my attempt tortures my mind with insupportable pain.” The fine figure of Conrad had excited the attention of Marianne, and a number of pleasing emotions and desires in her bosom, but the supposition of his attempt being aimed at the rescue of some female who possessed his love, had in some measure repelled them to their source; the
mention

mention of a beloved sister seemed to imply that his heart was disengaged, and immediately every seductive attraction was displayed in her manners: "I will cheer-
" fully assist you," said she, "in any
" other attempt you may wish to make
" for the purpose of delivering your sister
" from her confinement, in which, as
" you are so well acquainted with all the
" passages, you will probably succeed;" though there was not the most remote intention in her mind of again visiting the castle, and she only made the offer for the purpose of detaining Conrad, and engaging his notice. The latter, however, too evidently saw that the discovery of the present would render any other attempt nearly hopeless, and the perception of this sunk him deeper in despair, but wishing not to offend the female whom he had accidentally released, knowing the
danger

danger in which he should be involved if she betrayed the plan he had formed; for though it would equally environ her, yet she might make her peace with the Baron by sacrificing him, he forbore, therefore, from giving utterance to the rage that swelled in his breast, and calmly said, "I must return to the castle, and
"release from captivity my beloved
"sister." Marianne had not the least desire to accompany him, and made many seductive attempts to detain the elegant youth, whose manly graces had captivated her heart, but she was ignorant of the powerful charm that called him back, and, finding her endeavours vain, was at length forced to desist, and content herself with requesting him to lead his sister to the cottage where they were now inmates, at which place she would wait his return, and from whence they might depart together

gether in search of some retreat where they might enjoy peace and security. To this request Conrad instantly acceded, though with no intention of really complying with it; the forward manners of Marianne displeased him, added to which his whole soul was occupied by Matilda, and he wished for no partner in his flight but her with whom he was united by the tenderest ties of affection.

END OF VOL. I.

M



Col
Robert